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Ottawa 96

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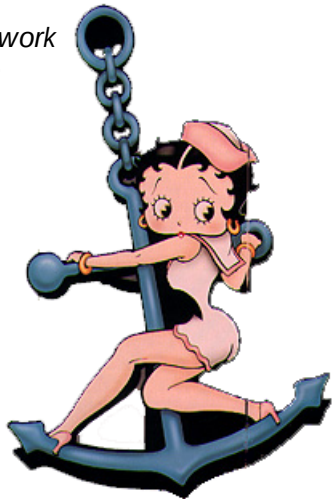

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

by Harvey Deneroff

Theme Park Animation

Several years ago, when I started doing detailed profiles of animation studios for my Animation Report newsletter, it quickly became evident that theme park animation was showing up with more frequency than I had imagined in the filmographies of a number of companies. It was this realization that opened my eyes to the fact that this sort of production was a small, but increasingly important segment of the animation industry. And for anyone who has experienced such attractions as The Back to the Future Ride at Universal City Studios knows, it can also be a lot of fun.

We start our survey of animation in theme parks with Robin Allan's "Disneyland and Europe: Walt Disney's First Magic Kingdom," which details how the first of modern theme parks came about, and the influences of Europe and Disney cartoons shaped its character.

In "Something's Wrong With Our Ship: Animated Motion-Simulator Films in Theme Parks," Judith Rubin provides an introduction to the nature of animated ride-films, along with a rundown of the latest productions from some of the leaders in the field, including New Wave Entertainment, Rhythm & Hues, Midland Productions, SimEx and The Works. Rita Street gets more specific with her profile of one of the oldest companies in the field in "BRC Imagination Arts," whose portfolio extends to films made for "World Fairs, aquariums, museums and visitors centers." Then, Bob Swain, interviews director Jim Cameron in "T2-3D" and how he and his company, Digital Domain, turned his classic sci-fi film, Terminator 2 into a 3D extravaganza at Universal City Studios, Orlando.

In "The Fremont Street Experience: No Glitz, No Glory!," Frankie Kowalski talks with Jane Baer, of The Baer Animation Company, about what it was like animating for the world's largest electric sign (and biggest movie screen as well) which towers over four city blocks in downtown Las Vegas. And John Canemaker recalls how animation pioneer Otto Messmer, of Felix the Cat fame, worked on a somewhat more modest scale for a sign in New York's Time Square over a half century earlier.

On a completely different topic, Jill McGreal, in her "The National Lottery: A Polemic," examines how Britain's policy of privatization of government activities might impact the country's animation industry. She sees hope, however, in an innovative plan to tap into the monies generated by the national lottery as a possible solution. Also, Nicolas Valluet examines the problems of "authors" in negotiation contracts for putting their works online in "Contracts for Original Works Published on Internet."

In this month's selection of reviews and reports on festivals and conferences, I start off with a brief look at Betty Boop: The Definitive Collection, a new boxed set of eight video tapes, as well as take a more extended look at the recent conference put on by the Society of Animation Studies, at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Also, Gene Walz reports in from the latest edition of the Ottawa International Animation Festival, the premiere event of its kind in North America, and David Marshall does the same for the first edition of the Brisbane Animation Festival.

Finally, Frankie Kowalski's Desert Island Series hears from several people involved in theme park animation at various levels, including Digital Domain's Scott Ross, Baer Animation's Jane Baer and BRC Imagination Arts' Bob Rogers, while John R. Dilworth presents the latest installment of his "The Dirdy Birdy" comic strip.

Announcing Animation Review

It is no secret that a number of the articles that we have presented in past issues derive from the work of some of the leading scholars in the field of animation studies. Their works are often presented first at conferences put on by organizations like the Society for Animation Studies and published in peer-reviewed publications like Animation Journal.

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Needless to say, there are limits to presenting scholarly work in a publication like Animation World Magazine. There are certain limits to what one can present in a magazine aimed at a more general readership: articles may have to be drastically cut, the writing simplified and footnotes dispensed with. This, along with the fact that, outside of Animation Journal, there are no other peer-reviewed publications devoted strictly to animation. Thus AWN is proud to announce that it will be publishing a new online academic journal, Animation Review. I will act as Editor-in-Chief, although individual issues will be under the direction of one of several Associate Editors, which will include some our leading animation scholars.

We naturally invite submissions from readers, details of which can be found in the Call for Papers at the end of my report of the Society for Animation Studies Conference in this issue.

Call for Films & Videos

Animation World Magazine would like to expand its coverage of new independent animated films and videos. However, it is hard for us to keep up with what's new in this area, especially as many individuals and smaller studios lack the public relations apparatus that larger companies have. As such, we would invite filmmakers and companies to feel free to submit their works for possible review; material should be submitted on videotape; VHS tapes using NTSC format is preferred, but other formats are also acceptable. We offer no guarantees, but will try to give proper consideration to all titles submitted.

Harvey Deneroff
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Call For Papers

Animation Review
The International Journal of History, Theory & Criticism

Animation Review, a new peer-reviewed journal to be published on the Internet by the Animation World Network, is now soliciting papers in all areas of animation studies. Submissions, using the Chicago Style Manual, can be made as an email attachment or on computer disc (in any standard PC or Macintosh word processing format), along with three copies of the paper. Articles should be in English. In all instances, the author's name should not appear in the body of the paper, but should be on a cover page, as all articles will be blind refereed.

Articles and inquiries should be sent to:

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Disneyland and Europe: Walt Disney's First Magic Kingdom

by Robin Allan

Sleeping Beauty Castle, the entrance to Fantasyland
© Disneyland

In the late 1990s, with a proliferation of theme parks all over the Western world, as well as in Africa and the Far East, it is difficult to recall that just over 40 years ago there were none—until Walt Disney opened Disneyland in 1955. There were national exhibitions and world fairs on one hand, and pleasure parks on the other. And that was that. Disney combined the two forms and added a new ingredient—fantasy, adapted from his animated films. Disneyland extended animation, using the heritage of Europe and a nostalgia for an American past, wrapped up as a three-dimensional package and consumed by visitors, very much in the way Disney had seen patrons making use of his films as products. It was a creative dream by the man who had seen the story of Snow White (1937) grow in his mind until it could be realized dramatically through the animation skills of his staff. The financial risk taken by Disney in his new venture had its parallels in the one he took nearly 20 years previously when he was pouring his energy and resources into the making of Snow White.

The Enchanted Tiki Room, Adventureland (interior)
© Disneyland

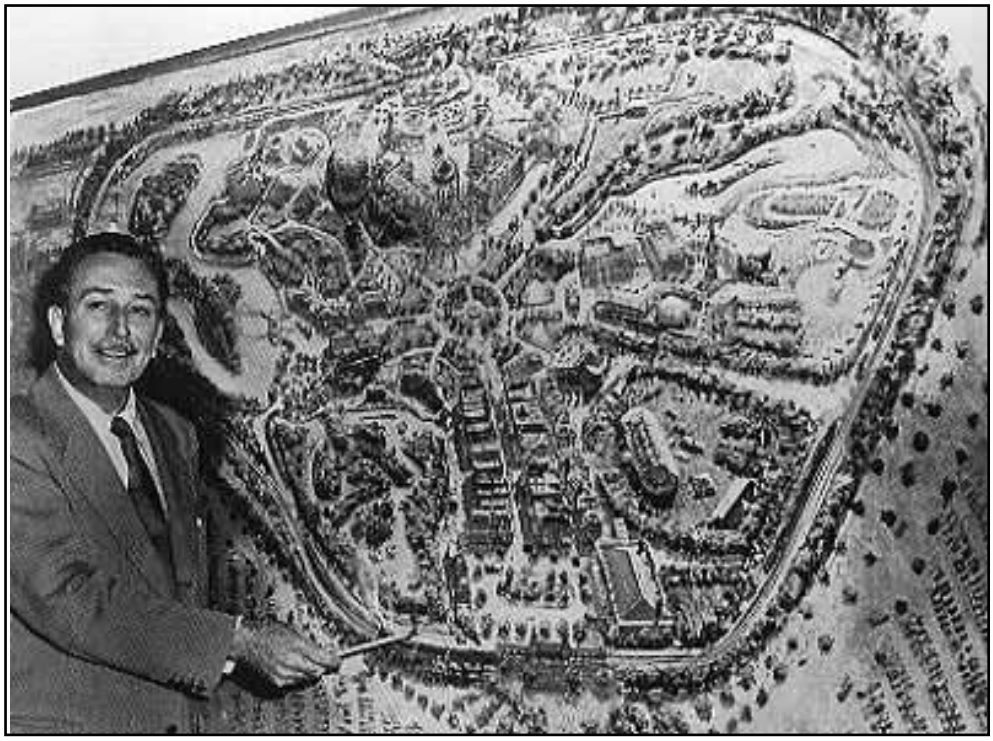
Rest, Recreation & Nostalgia

At first, Disney searched unsuccessfully for a park that possessed the ingredients that he was looking for; the American parks depressed him with their squalor, their lack of organization, haphazard and tiring acres of concrete, their surly personnel. In Denmark, he was impressed by Tivoli Garden. "It was spotless and brightly colored and priced within the reach of everyone," he said. "The gaiety of the music, the excellence of the food and drink, the warm courtesy of the employees—everything combined for a pleasurable experience."

He had begun thinking about a park for employees and friends as early as 1948 on vacant land near the studio, and in an internal memo he wrote:

> *The Main Village, which includes the Railroad Station, is built around a village green or informal park. In the park will be benches, a bandstand, drinking fountain, trees and shrubs. It will be a place for people to sit and rest; mothers and grandmothers can watch over small children at play. I want it to be very relaxing, cool and inviting.*

The text is clearly Disney's own. The emphasis on comfort and safe-



Disney with the plans for Disneyland
© Disneyland

ty, with concern for the users is part of the Disney ethos. His insistence on placing his audience in the forefront of all his discussions is characteristic; Disneyland is still, today, a place of rest and recreation and, for the adult, nostalgia. The visitor is reminded of the past at every turn, from the moment one steps out into Main Street to the end of the visit, where everyone has to leave by the same entrance/exit. Disney did not want the public to be disorientated by too many exits. Like a film inside a cinema, the park is hidden from view and only the vast parking lot, a horizontal equivalent to the expressionless exterior of a movie theater, is a clue to the numbers of people that the park absorbs. Once through the tunnel that lies under the bank built to screen the Magic Kingdom from the outside world, one is inside a film, taking part in a Western or adventure story, or experiencing the vicarious thrill of a night flight over Never Land.

Disneyland is still a place of rest and recreation and, for the adult, nostalgia.

Cartoons Made Real

Disney could now make real the two-dimensional world of his cartoons, which he had been trying to make more lifelike through technical devices such as the multiplane camera and through ever more exact copying from live-action film.

His new imaginary world was made concrete by the same artists who had created his cartoon films. So there was a continuity in collective thinking and in practical ability. By utilizing their skills, Disney combined a nostalgia for the past of America (a past colored itself by its own popularizing through the cinema) and the imaginary fantasy of Europe, symbolized by the sight of Sleeping Beauty's castle pointing its pinnacles into the Californian sky beyond the confines of Main Street. This was a world of the miniature where geography and history could be eliminated literally in the twinkling of an eye, a dreamscape made manifest. As in a dream, the visitor glided as if by magic by means of boat or train or cable car monorail or "people mover"; as in a dream, there was a smooth transference from one world to another; there was no need to walk, and the exhaustion caused by other parks and museums, a reminder of reality and of bodily limitations all too linked to the actual world, was at once removed.

Water featured as an element in many of the animated films; so with Disneyland. Water flowed everywhere, a companion to the stroller or as a means of conveyance on a number of rides, or as an adventurous accompaniment. It is difficult to remember that all the water in the Disney park is, though real in element, false in direction and flow, false in place. It has been diverted, pumped and projected over artificial rocks and into artificial lagoons and lakes and rivers. Reality has been made into fantasy. Water has almost been turned into wine. In fact, the whole park is a controlled

Disney standing on Main St. under his apartment.
© Disneyland

environment, with color coded buildings, scaled down vistas and perspectives, so that the visitor, the "guest," sees only what the designer has planned him or her to see.

John Hench, who was one of Disney's closest collaborators on the development of Disneyland told me that, "We had total control, a visual literacy. Live action filming has to count on a lot of accidents, but in a cartoon we could gradually eliminate the things that contradicted what we were trying to say. With the background we had, this was a very easy thing to apply to the third dimension."

Umberto Eco, in his book Travels in Hyper-Reality, has also drawn attention to the American passion for collection, the appetite for adding a detritus of the past even vicariously through a variety of sources, in particular from Europe. His comments on the Hearst/Kane-San Simeon/Xanadu kaleidoscope can also be applied to Disneyland and its "voracity of selection ... the fear of being caught up in this jungle of venerable beauties which unquestionably has its own wild flavour, its own pathetic sadness, barbarian grandeur and sensual perversity." Eco continues by saying that, "the ideology of this America wants to establish reassurance through imitation."

His new imaginary world was made concrete by the same artists who had created his cartoon films.

Total Control

Disney, however, went further, with the satisfaction of total control over an environment which could not be defiled by life, that was perfect, brighter, cleaner, prettier, its dolls and puppets able to perform always at command; making art more perfect than life. The "lifelong rage to order, control and keep clean any environment he inhabited" that Richard Schickel stresses in his book The Disney Version, led also to the creation of the figures which populated his dream world. As ringmaster to a circus, his animals and clowns and performers had to obey his commands implicitly. Here lay the seeds not only for the scale of Disneyland, but also for the audio-animatronic figures with which he would populate the individual rides.

The "Partners" statue (Walt Disney & Mickey Mouse) in the Central Plaza, south of the entrance to Sleeping Beauty Castle.

© Disneyland

The little articulated model man which he brought back from an early visit to Europe was the inspiration for one of the first of the theme lands that he planned for his Disneyland ideas, a Lilliputian land that never actually materialized. However, based on the mechanical bird that he also brought back from Europe, the first audio-animatronic figures were birds for the Tiki Room, a Polynesian show at Disneyland which for crassness beggars description, but which was an immediate and long-lasting success; it was a particular favorite of Disney's and is the one presentation which bears his personal stamp.

Another link with the animated film, on which the Magic Kingdom is so carefully based, is the appearance of living performers as cartoon characters. These are members of the Disney "cast" wearing three-dimensional plastic heads. They emerge from secret entrances from time to time as if by magic, their heads frozen into inanimate grotesques of their cartoon originals which could squash or stretch themselves into any conceivable shape. These caricatured animal and comic figures with their giant masks, though monstrous to the adult, seem to attract children, who cluster round the performers-as-Disney characters. The power once again of the mask as icon is seen as pro-

The Mickey Mouse planter at the Main Entrance to Disneyland.
© Disneyland

tective, assuring.

On the other hand, the nearly human all-electronic figure of Abraham Lincoln is the more alarming or threatening because of its similarity to and yet differencs from its model, the real. Artifice here becomes morbid and polite to the nightmare of a future where films like *Westworld* (1973) and *Blade Runner* (1982) can and surely will become reality.

Disney as puppet master had no vision beyond the recreation of reality through his figures, and could not see how easily his benignity could become malignity. The horror of the Lincoln exhibit is bound up with the American ideal, with the desire to start afresh, to recreate, to encompass, to package, to package humanity.

Artifice becomes morbid and polite to the nightmare of a future where films like *Blade Runner* (1982) can and surely will become reality.

Disneyland has been likened to the great private parks of Europe, the enclosures for an elite like the court of Louis XIV at Versailles. The icons are different, the few have become the ordinary people who can afford the entrance fee, the public with whom Disney instinctively identified. Although separated culturally, "each in its own way celebrates similar pleasures and pieties," as Christopher Finch put it in his *Wa,lt Disney's America,* "Each reflects the culture that produced it, removed from everyday realities of life."

A New Toy

Disney was continually changing Disneyland, tinkering, improving, altering. For him it was never static or complete and there are many stories about him; he would stay overnight—he had an apartment over the fire station on Main Street USA—and wandered around the park looking for ways to improve or enlarge his dreamscape. So he had wandered around the studio at night or at the weekend looking at his artists' work, surveying their scribbles and even the discarded material in their wastebaskets. He would talk to people in the park, ask questions, invite comments. It was his new toy.

Ray Bradbury, himself a teller of tales, was a close friend of Disney and told me about the European origin of the mythological center of Disneyland. Bradbury is also an American from the Midwest living on the West Coast.

> Disney was only out to do one thing, to please himself. He saw a hunger, a need in himself and the world … What happened with Walt is the same thing that happened to a lot of us later in our lives, that he went to Europe and he looked around the castles and the chateaux and the parks, the architecture, the artistic influences and he came home and he said, "God darn it! I'm gonna give this as a gift to my people."

Soon after the park was opened, the head gardener came to Walt and said,

> "Look Walt, I've got a little problem I want to show you," and he took him over to a spot facing the castle, and said, "Look. I've got to have a sign here which says 'Keep off the grass,' because look at the way everyone's trampling down these pansies trying to get a shot of the castle with their cameras. So can I have a little barrier here, a little fence?'
>
> Walt says, "No. Wait a minute. Tell you what we'll do. We'll put a little rock walk right through there and we'll put up a sign that says, 'Best vantage point for filming the castle.'"

Robin Allan is a writer and art historian based in Derbyshire, England. He has lectured on Disney in Britain, Germany and the United States, and his book Walt Disney and Europe *will be published by John Libbey in 1997.*

Something's Wrong With Our Ship

Animated Motion-Simulator Films in Theme Parks

by Judith Rubin

NewWave Entertainment
Astro Canyon Coaster; Cosmic Pinball; Devil's Mine Ride; Glacier Run; Hi-Chip Tour; Journey Through the Center of the Earth; Kid Coaster; RGB Adventure; Secrets of the Lost Temple; Volcano Mine Ride.
Where to see them: *Iwerks Turbo Ride Theaters in locations worldwide, including: Empire State Building, New York; Reino Aventura, Mexico City; Seacon Square, Bangkok; Tokyo Dome, Tokyo; Star City Metro, Manila; and Hoyt's Cinemotion, Melbourne. Showscan simulator theaters in locations worldwide including: Cinemania in Uni-versal CityWalk, Universal City, California; CN Tower, Toronto; Cartuja Park, Seville; Lotte World, Seoul, Gardaland, Verona; Mitsubishi Ocean Dome, Kyushu, Japan; and Nordsjoellands Sommerpark, Copenhagen.*

***Funhouse Express*:**
© Midland Productions

Animation in theme parks most frequently appears in the form of the four-minute, motion-simulator film or ridefilm. Simulator films generally are produced in special formats, and they are the visual component of a brief virtual adventure through some fantastic terrain or other. The motion component is provided by the theater seats, which are programmed to move in concert with the film. Generally the experience simulates a ride in a vehicle, frequently down a track or through a tunnel.

Ridefilms are a bit formulaic in their storytelling. Producer Charlotte Huggins and designer Ray Spencer of NewWave Entertainment, a Belgium-based company that is probably the foremost producer of animated ridefilms, humorously sort the ridefilm genre into six plot categories: 1) Rollercoaster/Track, 2) Flying, 3) Underwater, 4) Racetrack/One Plane, 5) Object/Person point-of-view and 6) Dark Ride. Within those plots, the following devices are most common: A) Sister Ship, B) Molecular Shrink, C) Time Machine, D) Crisis Landing, E) Something's Wrong With Our Ship, F) Save the Planet, G) Oops! Wrong direction, H) Time Clock, I) Encounter an Evil Creature, J) Camera point-and-shoot and K) On-camera "host." Under this system, Back to the Future—the Ride, which plays at the Universal Studios' parks in Hollywood and Orlando, is a #2ACDEFGHIK.

"You have four minutes to tell your story," says Ray Spencer from New Wave's Sherman Oaks, California office. "It unfolds in a linear way. We see them as minidramas of two to four acts each. A backstory is essential."

"It's easy to have CG animation look like CG animation," says Spencer from New Wave's Sherman Oaks, California office. "But that holds the customer at a distance. We work to create enough interest and enthusiasm by using material to which people can relate; something that connects them to their real-world experience. Animation is not an end in itself."

Spencer praises computer animation for its versatility. With virtual sets and environments, he says, you can do what would be too

costly to do with miniatures. "We can create anything in our workstations," he says. "There's no limit on subject or on setting. But you have to understand how the eye sees things. The software can't do it right without human intervention."

With virtual sets and environments, you can do what would be too costly to do with miniatures.

The lifespan of a successful simulator film is fairly long, Spencer notes, because there are always new audiences and repeat ridership. New Wave's first production, the 1993 *Devil's Mine Ride,* is still showing around the world. In it, a crusty, diabolical old miner decides to send us on an alternative tour to the one we're supposed to be expecting, and in our simulated vehicle we go crashing and swooping through tunnels and along tracks in a disused and dangerous sector of the ancient mine. The challenge, says Spencer, was to create an organic look of rotting timbers, twisted rails, flickering torches and falling rocks. "It was an ambitious project at the time," he laughs. "None of us was sure we could pull it off."

Not all New Wave's ridefilms have the organic look. *Silicon Adventure,* a trip through a chip, is appropriately slick and geometric. Still, Spencer emphasizes the need to have elements that make the journey real, credible. Inside the chip are stamped-on numbers, a company logo, dust, "things that we all recognize in a particular scale," says Spencer. The different areas of the *Silicon Adventure* chip were depicted metaphorically. The RAM area is filled with cyclones and sparks to represent energy. The ROM area is very linear and organized-looking. In a visual pun of the animation process, the graphics area resembles a fabrication shop. The sound area is crammed with sound effects and crazy occurrences. Recent productions include *Red Rock Run* and *Secrets of the Lost Temple.* Budgets run from $700 K to $5 million, averaging at about $2 million, says Charlotte Huggins.

Rhythm & Hues

Seafari

Where to see it: *Porto Europa in Wakayama, Japan*

Ellen's Energy Crisis

Where to see it: *Epcot Center, Orlando*

Star Trek: The Experience

Where to see it: *Las Vegas Hilton*

Los Angeles-based Rhythm & Hues is a leader in computer animation, having done many sequences for commercials and feature films as well as amusement parks. Their work can be seen in the film *Babe* and the Pepsi polar bears spots. And according to Executive Producer Ellen Coss, the company's production *Seafari* is considered by many in the business to be one of the best CGI pieces in any genre. It opened at Porto Europa in 1994. "Even now," says Coss, "it pushes the envelope in terms of lighting and animation." The company relies almost entirely on its own proprietary software for animation productions.

All images of this 3 1/2-minute simulator film were computer modeled and lit in great detail, right down to the dust particles, bubbles and texture maps. The animation team included Larry Weinberg, Loren Lanning and Steve Ziolkowski. Weinberg went on to write his own commercially available animation software, called Poser.

The story: Our sister ship is lost and we are launched into the ocean on a search mission. Sammy the Dolphin turns up to guide our minisubmarine and protect us from dangers. And of course, we need his protection. We soon encounter a toothy sea monster and have to run for our lives. We dart inside an old tanker ship, pursued by the monster; we escape but the monster bites the tail end of our submarine, hitting the fuel tank. The captain hits the ejector button; the

Rival notes face off in Jazzland in *Adventures in Audiana*
© The Works

explosion blows us out of the water and we splash down back at the mother ship with our mission completed.

It's a Federation vs. Klingon battle in space that includes a sequence in which the ship touches down on the Las Vegas Strip.

The preshow features a two-ton water tank with Sammy swimming around inside. He's an animated rear projection and seems to be a real, solid creature, except that he talks to us, has a cartoonishly expressive face and wears a backpack.

Rhythm & Hues also produced the 50-second, animated opening sequence for Ellen's Energy Crisis, which opened in summer 1996 at the Exxon Pavilion in Epcot Center. The show is hosted by TV personalities Bill Nye and Ellen Degeneres. The animation is a CGI conception of the big bang and the formation of earth.

Star Trek: The Experience is a new simulator ride slated to open at the Las Vegas Hilton in March 1997. The entire hotel is being retrofitted with a Star Trek theme. R&H is producing the 70mm simulator film and its preshow, using animation plus some live action. It's a Federation vs. Klingon battle in space that includes a sequence in which the ship touches down on the Las Vegas Strip. The company is also in production on an elaborate, animated film for an Imax 3D simulator ride. It opens sometime next year at Caesar's Emporium in Las Vegas. From their hydraulic, moving seats, audience members will don headsets that include electronic, liquid-crystal shuttered glasses and special sound systems and be enveloped by 3D images on a 70mm dome screen.

Tad and Mike (or MC) in *Adventures in Audiana*
© The Works

Midland Productions
Funhouse Express
Where to see it: *Sega City@Playdium,Toronto; Sega Joypolis, Niigata, Japan; Neo Geo World, Tsukuba, Japan; The Magical World of Fantasy Island, Lincolnshire, England; Gaumont Theaterplex, Valenciennes, France.*

Since Berkeley-based Midland Productions entered the simulation field in 1989, they have made nine simulation films. Some feature live action, some miniatures, some CGI, or combinations thereof. The company is now focusing principally on CGI production. Funhouse Express, produced by Midland in 1995 for Imax Ridefilm, features stop-motion animation all the way through.

The protagonist of Funhouse, Jimmy, is a downtrodden, disgruntled clown who operates an old broken-down funhouse for a tyrannical boss. But he has secretly built his own fantastical ride in the bowels of the funhouse, and this secret ride is the one on which he takes us. It's been built out of old bits and pieces of carnival equipment. Our adventure includes riding along the tongue of an enormous head, going down a dark tunnel to encounter a huge pair of snapping dentures at the end, bouncing off the nose of another huge clown head that is the ride's centerpiece, and cruising through a dimly-lit clown's graveyard. The film is extremely detailed and has the air of a Hieronymous Bosch painting. Midland's Yas Takata directed; animator was Anthony Scott. The four-minute film was made in VistaVision.

SimEx

In a collaboration with New York-based Ogden Entertainment, SimEx of Toronto is producing a motion-simulator feature that will open in zoos around the world in spring 1997. Allen Yamashita, creative director for the project, points out that the work will break new ground in content, style and venue.

It's a story about a little boy who dreams of covering the earth with buildings of his design. He is visited in his dreams by an animal spirit. The spirit reminds him that development plans need to include room for other living creatures, and takes him on a journey to acquaint him with other creatures, turning the boy into various animals and communicating a message of greater respect for other living things and

for peaceful coexistence and sharing of the environment.

The animation is being done in a style reminiscent of children's book illustration. It will combine CGI and 2D cel animation to evoke great visual depth. "We're not trying to replicate reality," says Yamashita. "This will be more like painting than photography." SimEx will take this film on the road in the spring along with two other new animated Yamashita films, Mars and Jove's Hammer. The films will run at participating zoos, museums and entertainment centers in SimEx's transportable, 40-seat simulator theater.

"The cost of computer animation can be amortized, if you produce something versatile."

The Works
Adventures in Audiana
Where to see it: *Futuroscope Park, Poitiers, France; Matsushita/Panasonic showrooms in Japan.*

The original version of this 6 1/2-minute, animated short story (not a simulator film) debuted in Japan in 1994 at regional expositions in the cities of Wakayama and Mie, and in Panasonic showrooms to promote their HDTV system. It was later redubbed in French for display at Futuroscope. According to Fred Hope, of Audiana producer The Works, based in Long Beach, a new cut is forthcoming to demo the Panasonic digital video disk system (DVD) that will shortly make all our CD-ROM drives obsolete.

"The cost of computer animation can be amortized, if you produce something versatile," says Hope. "We can take the whole design database of characters and objects and settings and reuse them. It's easy to recut, to stretch the concept, to dub it in a different language, even to retime it for different music." he says, pointing out that the digital disk version of Audiana will include dubs in four languages and subtitles in at least four more. The budget of the original was $1 million. "We could now do the exact same film for half the money and in half the time," says Hope.

Audiana screens at Futuroscope on a high-definition video projection screen with five-track surround sound. Each of the main characters is some kind of animated musical notation. The lead role is played by an animated treble clef called MC Treble. He expresses himself in rap music mode. Another character is a young, single note called Tad.

Tad is one of the Sound Rangers, a team of endearing young hero types. Audiana is a solar system of musical planet-cities named Orchestria, Rock City and Jazzland. In his role of caretaker, treble-clef MC zips around Audiana in his little ship, taking shortcuts through sound tunnels. He's working to resolve the plague of sound quakes that is causing a rash of sour notes throughout Audiana, and enlists the Sound Rangers in his mission. Together, they restore the musical harmony of their world. Keith Melton of Infinity Filmworks, Los Angeles was creative director; Magic Box Productions of Beverly Hills did the rendering and the soundtrack was written by The Works' Chip Smith. Panasonic was executive producer.

***Seafari* by Rhythm & Hues Inc.**
© Recreation Services

The Mars Ride
© SimEx Digital Studios

Judith Rubin (schmatte@mail.well.com) is an Oakland-based freelance writer in the themed entertainment industry, with a particular interest in special-format film and entertainment applications of technology. In addition to contributing a regular column to At-the-Park magazine, *she writes for Fujitsu Cultural Technologies' WorldsAway product family of animated, online virtual communities.*

BRC Imagination Arts

by Rita Street

The artists and engineers of BRC Imagination Arts have been in the business of creating special venue attractions for the past decade. In fact, if your summer vacation plans took you to the Disney-MGM Studios Theme Park in Florida, NASA/Johnson Space Center's Visitor Center in Texas or Knott's Berry Farm in California, then you probably experienced a little of their collective genius at work.

Says executive producer, vice president George Wiktor, "In essence everything we create is for people on holiday. Therefore everything we do has to be entertaining. That doesn't mean it can't be informative, but it does mean our work has to transport vacationers outside of themselves." Wiktor adds that even though his company creates events and attractions using a multitude of formats and creative techniques—including animation—the process of production never overshadows the end result. Since content is the one thing that keeps people coming back to attractions year after year, the quality of content, rather than the technology used to create it, must remain the focus. And, if there's one thing Wiktor has learned about content over the years—it's gotta be fun.

Says Wiktor, "We always imbue our projects with a sense of humor, wonder and emotion—all those elements that people love to share in a group. In fact, that's one of our basic rules. It's not technological at all but it's important—that special venues are group experiences; shared events between family, friends and strangers. It's definitely more fun to ride a roller coaster after watching hundreds of strangers get on a ride, scream and yell and then get off, than it would be to not have seen them. It sounds cliché, but when we are designing and producing a project we always say to ourselves, 'Remember. It's a party.' "

George Wiktor, Vice President, Production, BRC Imagination Arts
© BRC Imagination Arts

"We always imbue our projects with a sense of humor, wonder and emotion—all those elements that people love to share in a group."

Party Time

And a party it's certainly been for this company that opened back in 1981. Hidden behind an unassuming brick facade in an industrial area of Burbank, California, BRC is a think tank of 25 visual artists that, along with an army of freelancers, have won over 200 international awards and two Oscar nominations for their films and attractions at World Fairs, aquariums, museums and visitors centers.

"We're also known as the funny format filmmakers," jokes producer Marci Carlin, who says that her company has produced films for every format imaginable, for viewing in every kind of theater—even venues that entirely surround the audience. Excusing herself for what sounds like corporate propaganda, she adds, "Basically we sell solutions"—a catchy phrase that definitely describes BRC's core business.

For example, in 1988, Walt Disney Imagineers approached BRC to assist them in creating a tour through a working animation studio built at the Disney/MGM Studios theme park. Making the production experience accessible to viewers without disturbing the artists was the challenge.

"The first step in a project like this," says Carlin, "is to figure out just how long your experience

wants to be. Then you figure out your capacity—how many people can and need to be moving through the experience based on the number of people in the park on a given day. Then you design an experience that can comfortably accommodate that many people."

Magic of Disney

For "The Magic of Disney Animation," BRC and the Disney Imagineers decided to move approximately 1000 guest through the exhibit per hour. The experience begins in a movie theater (each theater holds approximately 250 audience members), then moves through all the departments of an animation studio—storyboard, layout, character animation, etc.—in elevated tiered passageways that allow both the visitors to view the animators and the animators, if they desire, to view the visitors.

"We wanted the audience to have sort of an over-the-shoulder experience," says Carlin. "So we put several risers in front of the windows that look down on the animators. This made for better viewing but also allowed us to increase the number of people moving through."

After a demonstration in the camera department audience members queue up for their third and final film experience (the second is enjoyed while standing in line for the last theater) then move into a museum-like display of famous Disney animation projects.

Working closely with Imagineers, BRC artists developed, scripted and produced all the short films exhibited throughout the experience. To introduce newcomers to the animation process in a compelling fashion, BRC producers cast veteran newscaster Walter Cronkite as a host or straight-man to the energetic Robin Williams. In the film Back To Neverland, Cronkite turns Williams into an animated character—one of the Lost Boys from Peter Pan—and together they lead the audience through a very "animated" tour of the production process. The film, directed by Jerry Rees, (Brave Little Toaster) was created in-house at BRC by a crew of Los Angeles-based freelancers.

***Magic of Disney*, Walter Cronkite and Robin Williams**
© Walt Disney Company

Carlin admits that what they are currently doing is so cutting edge that it's a little hard to deal with.

The other two media experiences BRC produced for "The Magic of Disney Animation" attraction did not require BRC's temporary animation studio, but did involve scripting and direction. One called "Animators on Animation" is an interview/documentary with famous Disney animators delving into the reasons why these artists chose animation as their life long careers. The other is a montage of classic Disney animation.

Space Center Houston

BRC delved into the realm of computer animation for its experience called "Space Center Houston." One element of this inspirational attraction, dedicated to "regenerating" interest in the Space Program, is a Space Shuttle Training Simulator ride called Land the Shuttle. Using IBM hardware and software, BRC artists and engineers mixed live action with real-time animation to create a ride that visitors could control. "We shot an astronaut character on a green screen stage so that his scenes could be composited with our animation," explains Carlin. "This character, named Chet, gives the player feedback on how he or she is doing; if the nose is down too far or the speed is too high. The shots of Chet were recorded on laserdisc and it became the computer software's job to sync up the frames of Chet with the real-time action of the animation. For instance if you crashed, then the computer would find the appropriate frame on the laserdisc and display a disheveled version of the astronaut."

Carlin is working on a top secret project now for client General

Motors that will also include a simulation ride. This time, however, the team at BRC will be using Silicon Graphics Hardware and several off-the-shelf animation products that are linked by proprietary software systems. Carlin admits that what they are currently doing is so cutting edge that it's a little hard to deal with. "We always say technology is not the solution—its the experience, but in this case, we're asking our software, and our hardware, to do things that they weren't originally intended to do in order to create the story we want. But that sort of thing happens to us a lot. We end up developing a new system or a new technique at the same time we are creating a solution and a story for a client."

BRC artists definitely have a few unusual techniques, even patents, up their collective sleeves. One very interesting—and very proprietary—example has to do with the animation of smoke. For a stage show at Knott's Berry Farm called Mystery Lodge, animated smoke that curls into images of salmon swimming upstream, or whales leaping from the water was used to visually aid an elderly Indian narrator as he tells the story of his life to the audience. Carlin, who describes the look of the effect as "images floating in a virtual plane," won't give away just how it is accomplished. However, she will say that the technical application of this patented process called "Holovision" is actually based on a 100-year-old magician's illusion called "Pepper's Ghost."

Future projects for BRC include a "totally new kind of theme park" for Warner Bros. Once again, artists and executives are committed to keeping this one a secret until it premieres, but rumor has it that it may include animation.

As for the future of special venues? George Wiktor believes that the world has only seen the tip of the iceberg. "Granted, home entertainment is going to become fascinating over the next several years, but I don't see it taking away from the popularity of special venues. Just look at the corollary between film and television. Film is more popular than it ever was. Also, special venues are now breaking out of amusement park ghettos—moving into malls and other venues that are more accessible—and thus becoming more a part of our daily lives."

Knott's Berry Farms *Mystery Lodge*, with special effects makes the tales of an Old Storyteller come alive.
© BRC Imagination Arts

Knott's Berry Farms *Mystery Lodge*, with special effects makes the tales of an Old Storyteller come alive.
© BRC Imagination Arts

Rita Street, a freelance writer based in Los Angeles, is the founder of Women in Animation and former editor and publisher of Animation Magazine.

T2-3D

by Bob Swain

Jim Cameron's reworking of Terminator 2 for the Universal Studios theme park in Orlando has resulted in one of the most spectacular displays of computer animation and special effects ever. Shot in a stereoscopic 65mm format, Terminator 2–3D combines live action, computer animation and real on-stage elements.

The final sections of the 12-minute production are projected onto three 24 x 50 foot screens, giving a total image span of 150 feet. That's three separate 65mm images side by side, each of them made up of separate images for the right and left eye.

James Cameron and Arnold Schwarzenegger
© Universal Studios Florida

Cameron produced the project at Digital Domain, the company he founded in 1993 together with Scott Ross and Stan Winston. The computer work was broken down into two areas—computer graphics imaging and compositing. A total of 47 computer graphic artists and 8 compositors worked full-time on the project for more than 6 months.

The story sweeps the audience from the present day forward to the year 2029 with Arnold Schwarzenegger's T-800 and resistance leader John Connor. They are pursued by Robert Patrick's liquid metal T-1000 and a team of other Terminators as they search for the central controlling core of Skynet. But when they do finally reach it they are faced with the ultimate test of the T-one million (or T-Meg). The confrontation with this six-legged creature features in a climactic 90 second 3D computer animation sequence across all three screens.

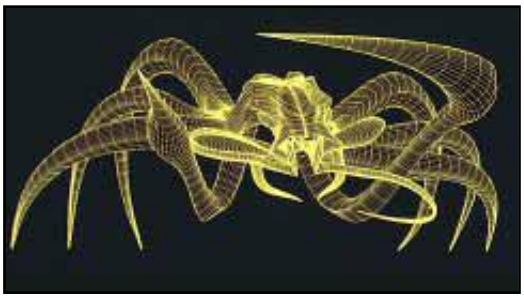
100% Digitally Processed

"T2-3D forced us to mature our CG animation department very, very rapidly, because we had to," says Cameron.

"The mimetic poly-alloy we used to create the first T-1000 and now the T-Meg is so well understood, it's been duplicated by everyone since T2. But it's never been done at this resolution and in three dimensions so we had a lot of 3D science to work out."

"T2-3D forced us to mature our CG animation department very, very rapidly, because we had to."

T2-3D is the first such major production to be 100 percent digitally processed. Every frame, including the live action, was manipulated in the computer in some way before being recorded to film. Cameron believes that eventually all films will be digitally processed from start to finish, making for easier editing, effects and fine tuning. The current cost of digitizing an entire two-hour feature film remains prohibitive, but the relatively short running time of T2-3D and the fact it was being made at a digi-



The inner skeleton of the T-Meg from the *T2-3D* ride from Digital Domain
© Digital Domain

tal production facility made it a realistic option on this occasion. Act 1 takes place in the Cyberdyne auditorium and starts with the Cyberdyne logo melting and morphing into the reflective head of the T-1000 and then into the face of actor Robert Patrick. The 3D technique makes the T-1000 seem to leap out into the theater and then snap back to the screen just as a real T-1000 actor is catapulted out from a trap door onto the stage. Computer generated elements were modeled and animated using a beta test version of Alias 7.0 and rendered in Renderman using a Digital Domain conversion program. Also featured in the first section and created using Alias and Renderman is a computer generated T-800 on a Harley-Davidson motorbike.

The T-Meg from the *T2-3D* ride from Digital Domain
© Digital Domain

Act 2 is primarily live action and features puppet robotics and animatronics by Stan Winston. Computer generated elements include Mini Hunter-Killers—flying probes approximately one foot in diameter used to search out the fugitives when they are hiding from the full helicopter-size Hunter-Killers. They were created as models, then digitally scanned into the computer and enhanced with Softimage and Renderman to give texture and shading.

Digital compositing was used throughout for everything from repositioning and reshaping explosions to extending doors and other elements of the set so that they would look larger than life. Compositing involved everything from layering 3 or 4 elements in scenes involving the insertion of the computer generated Mini Hunter-Killers to layers 40-thick which were used to create the detailed computer generated Skynet interior in the final scenes. Both Flame and Digital Domain's own proprietary Nuke program were used for the compositing.

The final Act begins with live stage actors descending in an elevator. But then all three screens are revealed to show a completely computer generated environment. The gleaming steel of Skynet's central core features on the center screen, with a chrome pyramid in front of a corridor that seems to stretch away to infinity: catwalks and conveyor belts crisscross the scene and liquid nitrogen moves through translucent walls and streams down from vents and piping.

Most of the Skynet modeling was done by an outside supplier using Side Effects' Prisms software. Digital Domain used Prisms and some Alias applications to add lighting, shading and some further models. The end result is a vast and highly detailed world.

Catwalks and conveyor belts crisscross the scene and liquid nitrogen moves through translucent walls and streams down from vents and piping.

The Ultimate Terminator

At this stage the ultimate Terminator makes its appearance. Modeled in Softimage, T-Meg is a six-legged poly-alloy spider which morphs out of molten chrome. Standing 30 feet high and with razor sharp legs, it scrambles from screen to screen, extending its legs out into the audience with the 3D effects. It was animated using Softimage Inverse Kinematics and lighting, color and texture were added with Softimage Mental Ray. This came in particularly useful for the self-reflections caused by its multiple chrome legs.

James Cameron on the set of T2.
© Universal Studios Florida

The point when the monster finally explodes into thousands of pieces was triggered using the particle animation properties of Prisms, controlling velocity, mass and weight. The legs collapse together under the control of Alias Dynamics. Digital Domain created its own in-house program called Shatter SOP (Shatter Surface Operation) to break the image up into interestingly shaped fragments and to interface with Prisms, which was used to animate the pieces. The T-Meg is then reformed using Softimage Meta-Clay.

In order to integrate Alias, Prisms and Softimage, Digital Domain wrote another in-house program to create a universal language which could then be ported direct to Renderman for the final rendering process.

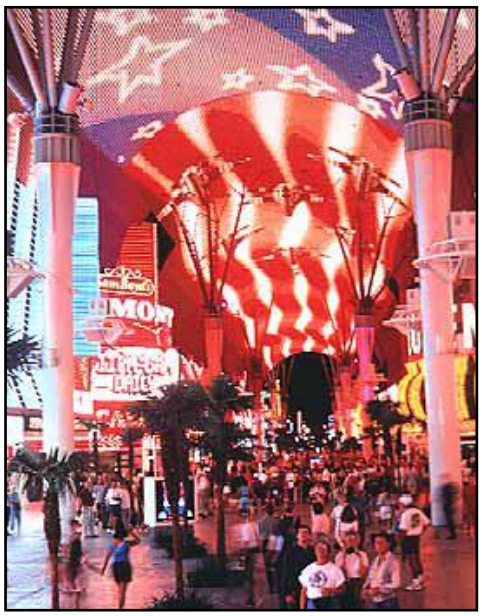
Bob Swain, who lives in Brighton, England, is a scriptwriter and journalist, who specializes in animation, computer graphics and special effects. This article first appeared in the British magazine, Cuts.

The Fremont Street Experience—
No Glitz, No Glory!

by Frankie Kowalski

When one visits Las Vegas for the first time, it seems like this big shiny oasis in the middle of a desert. As you arrive by plane, you can see the lights of the famous Strip miles away. And when you land, an air of excitement rushes through your veins while walking through the airport amidst an army of one arm bandits. But that's not all Las Vegas is about.

For instance, Fremont Street, or Glitter Gulch, has not been as glamorous for visitors and locals, yet it is still an important part of the local scene. Of late, the area has been rejuvenated with the construction of a new pedestrian mall, built in the hope of complementing the extravaganza of hotels and casinos on the more illustrious Strip. The result is a mall in the classic Vegas style, highlighted by the glitz of the Fremont Street Experience, which had its gala opening December 14, 1995.



Scenes from the Fremont Street Experience
© The Fremont Street Experience Company

Jane Baer, Principal of Baer Animation Company and her dog Millie.

The Experience was put together by the efforts of the Fremont Street Experience Company (made up of a collection of hotel and casino operators), the City of Las Vegas and the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, who collectively invested $70 million to transform Fremont Street into an urban "people place." The highlight is the huge Space Frame, which features dazzling computer-animated light and sound shows every night produced by such studios as The Baer Animation Company and See3.

A Sense of Scale.

The Space Frame itself arches to a height of 90 feet above street level and stretches almost 1,400 feet along Fremont Street, from Main Street to Fourth Street; its interior surface covers more than 175,700 square feet, an area equal to slightly more than four acres. The frame is 5 feet deep and has a curved radius of 44 feet. Set into the inner surface of the frame are nearly 2.1 million lights and is unofficially considered to be the world's largest graphics display system. Las Vegas obviously never abandons its sense of scale!

According to Steve Weeks, assistant division manager with Young Electric Sign Company, "This is the biggest project our company has ever worked on in its 75-year history." Within the frame are 208 speakers capable of producing 540,000 watts of "concert quality music" and 121 computers containing a combined 100 gigabytes of storage which can generate the animated images and sound.

So, how was the animation created for this mammouth Space Frame? I decided to drop in and see Jane Baer, principal of Baer Animation, the first studio to do animation for the Freemont Street Experience. "Like everything we try at Baer," she said, "working on this project was new adventure for us. I thought is was a fabulous idea from the beginning, lighting up four city blocks while entertaining passersby." Timed to country western favorites, dazzled spectators see and hear animated dancing cowboys, stampeding buffalos, TNT barrels exploding, collages of card decks snapping, starry constellations, and honky tonk fiddles playing in a seven minute film originally entitled Rodeo (now Americana) created at the launch of the project.

Set into the inner surface are nearly 2.1 million lights and is unofficially the world's largest graphics display system.

Jane Baer, who received her initial training in animation at Disney's

under the tutelage of the "Nine Old Men," began her company in 1984. Since then it has created animation for a wide range of productions, ranging from features to commercials. The studio is housed in a quaint Spanish-style house in Studio City, California, with beam ceilings and garden patio, with Jane's canine companion, Millie as unofficial greeter. The company is best known their work on the groundbreaking ***Who Framed Roger Rabbit****, being responsible for the "Toon Town" and "Benny the Cab" sequences. In addition to doing the animation for key sequences in a number of other major animated features, the studio has done commercials for such products as Coca Cola, Rice Krispies, Pampers, Kellogg's Frosted Flakes, and (Charlie the) Starkist Tuna. So, selecting Baer Animation for the first Space Frame animation was the perfect fit for Jane Baer and the Fremont Street Experience Company.*

"Transferring animation into light limited our color range, because certain colors, like greens and yellows, went flat. And some colors turned to white light!"

Fascinated With Disney

The Fremont Street Experience was the brainchild of Steve Wynns, of Mirage Resorts, and Kenny Wynns, of Atlandia Design, a subsidiary of Mirage Resorts, who provided expertise in design and construction. Jane was introduced to them by a long-time friend, Roland Fargo Krump. One of the reasons she hit it off so well with the Wynns, who were fascinated with Walt Disney and that Steve Wynn had a visual sense much like Disney.

Fremont Street Experience's Space Frame
© The Fremont Street Experience Company

Jane says that all she and director Russell Calibrisi had to go on when they started working on the project was the eight country western songs that were to be used as the soundtrack. Then they and their crew storyboarded, created the color design and produced the animation in just two months. Baer explained that, "We were working in a short amount of time with a brand new technology It was something that had never been done before. One of the challenges we faced was choosing the best color palette. Transferring animation into light limited our color range, because certain colors, like greens and yellows, went flat. And some colors turned to white light!"

Each animation cycle was programmed using a complex math equation to traverse the five bays that encompass the Space Frame, each of which had different dimensions. And due to both the scale and the technology involved, Jane commented that, "the subtly we are accustomed to in animation just didn't work. We were lucky to get it right the first time because we tried to tell too much of a story. We learned from our experience to use much broader elements in our design."

Rodeo features large blocked images of legendary cowboy heroes crisscross across the arc of the Space Frame and ends with a beautiful array of constellations streaming across the screen. Some of the eight animated cycles display the words

Scene from *Rodeo* the Fremont Street Experience produced by Baer Animation
© The Fremont Street Experience Company

to the song as in the old Fleischer sing-a-longs. "People at the show really get involved, singing and dancing along. It was exciting to watch first hand," Jane remarked. Her favorite part, though, is the opening, which is animated to Willie Nelson's "Don't Let Your Sons Grow Up to be Cowboys."

The Fremont Street Experience has had some success in attracting traffic downtown, with gaming revenues alone having increasing almost 16% since March, the biggest month-to-month increase in 4 years. It is not often that animation can both pioneer a new technique and bring a new vitality to a major urban landscape. We shouldn't expect any less from the glimmering lights and minds of Las Vegas.

Frankie Kowalski is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine *and is currently on ASIFA-Hollywood's Board of Directors. She was a recent contributor to* Daily Variety's *Special Animation Issue.*

The Electric Felix Man

by John Canemaker

Messmer at his desk at Douglas Leigh Organization. Courtesy Doris Messmer

Otto Messmer was a lucky man.

True, he never received screen credit on the more than 150 Felix the Cat cartoon shorts he directed during the 1920s. Producer Pat Sullivan saw that only his name accompanied Felix's on the screen.

It is also true that Messmer never received a cent of the lucrative royalties generated from licensing the Cat's image to an international array of merchandisers; along with accolades from Felix fans around the world, Sullivan also happily accepted all the licensing loot.

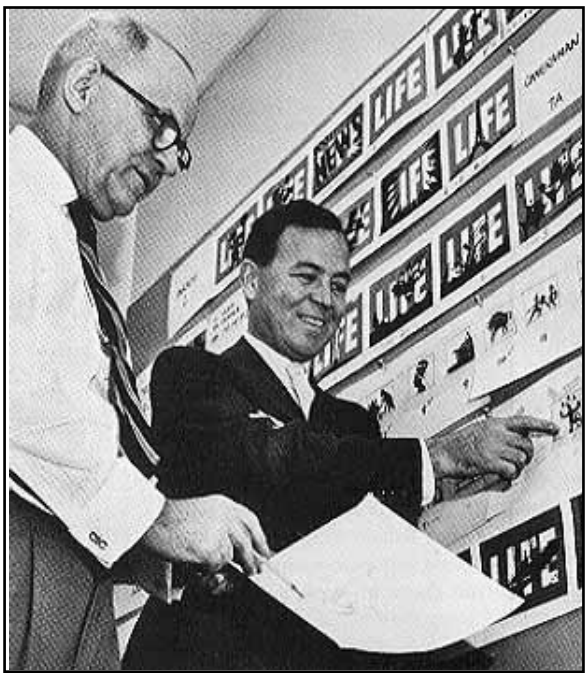
And it is true that Messmer never owned the copyright to the famed cartoon Cat he created in 1919 and to whom he gave a distinctive personality that profoundly inspired the character animators who followed, including Walt Disney. A deathbed promise from Sullivan that ownership of the character would pass from him to Messmer proved untrue.

Yet, Messmer considered himself a lucky man. A shy artist, he often stated that he felt fortunate to work all day at his drawing board as a "salaried man," shielded by Sullivan from the high pressure, aggressive domain of film business deals and product promotion. Messmer's gift lay in dreaming up brilliant visual gags and imaginative stories for Felix, and gently (but authoritatively) supervising the small team of animators who assisted him in making one film every two weeks. If forfeiture of fame and riches was the price to be paid for enjoying a decade of intensely personal creative expression, Messmer considered it to be more than a fair exchange.

When the Felix studio died with Pat Sullivan in 1933, Messmer unhappily wandered Felix-less to other cartoon studios. In 1936, the Van Buren Studio acquired rights from Sullivan's heirs to make three sound-and-Technicolor Felix shorts. Messmer was asked to direct but he wriggled out of the assignment.

After years of devising pantomimic performances for a simple ink blot character, Messmer may have felt insecure about his ability to make toons using the new technology of soundtracks and color. Less was always more when Messmer animated Felix; his silent black and white drawn world was so direct, simple and pure, it seemed like cinematic haiku.

Messmer continued to draw the Felix comic books, but his film directing days seemed to be over. Then, in 1937, his luck again came to the fore when he was hired by Douglas



Messmer (left) discussed with Don Leigh a storyboard for a giant animated electric sign. Courtesy Doris Messmer

An advertisement for Mattel Toys, drawn by Otto Messmer, one of the many clients using Leigh-EPOK animated electric signs.
Courtesy Doris Messmer

Leigh, the "Sign King" or "Lamplighter of Broadway," the man behind the construction of huge animated electric signs that illuminated Times Square and other urban spaces around the globe. For the next 37 years until his retirement in 1973, Messmer designed and directed characters and moving graphics for the Leigh-EPOK Spectacular, described by Leigh as "an oversized advertising display with neons or lamps in unusual animations."

Otto and EPOK were a miraculous match. Here was work that was incredibly similar to what Messmer did when he first joined the Sullivan studio nearly a quarter century before: dreaming up silent visual gags for black-silhouetted personality-driven characters. Working essentially alone, with only an assistant to blacken in the drawings, Messmer was again a salaried man shielded from bothersome business details by a strong entrepreneur. Leigh, like Sullivan, paid him a weekly salary for anonymously creating lively cartoons that would be seen and enjoyed by a worldwide audience.

It is amusing and somewhat touching to note that in 1937, while Messmer was enjoying a giant leap backward in animation technique and aesthetics, Walt Disney was premiering his first feature-length cartoon Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs.

© John Canemaker

John Canemaker is a filmmaker and animation historian. He heads the animation program at New York University and his books include Before Animation Begins: The Art and Lives of Disney Inspirational Sketch Artists (Hyperion), Tex Avery: The MGM Years (Turner), and Felix: The Twisted Tale of the World's Most Famous Cat (Da Capo).

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The National Lottery: A POLEMIC

by Jill McGreal

The idea of a National Lottery has always seemed an un-British sort of thing, somehow colliding with the Protestant work ethic and distinctly continental in flavor. Nevertheless, when the National Lottery opened for business in December 1994, no one, least of all the Tory Government which devised it, had correctly predicted the spectacular take up rate from amongst all sections of the Great British population. Perhaps the shift from post-war settlement and the politics of consensus to monetarist economics and the politics of conviction has bred the kind of individualism that now embraces the opportunity for huge personal gain.

***Jukebox* by Run Wrake, Animate! 5 minutes, 1994**
Two years in five minutes ... How old are you? Employing a montage of xeroxed paintings and sound, *Jukebox* is a personal journey through fragmented experience. Former Royal College of Art student Run Wrake now works out of commercials production house Bermuda Shorts.

The five centers selected to distribute Lottery money were told to expect about £15 million (US$23.8 million) per annum income from the Lottery. This estimate was way out—each center receives between £250-£280 million ($396-$444 million) per annum from this fabulous source. Add to this sum the same amount again taken by the Treasury, 7% taken by Camelot, the company which administers the Lottery and the many millions won every week by the punters—the total is astronomical.

This movement from public to private is part of a wider trend towards privitization of public services that the Tory administration has pursued relentlessly since 1979.

Where does all this money go? The five centers are: The Arts Council, The Sports Council, The National Heritage Memorial Fund (which purchased the Churchill papers for the controversial sum of £8 million [$12.7 million]), The Millennium Fund (which will build the new site for the Tate Gallery) and The Charities Board. All applications for Lottery cash must be processed through one or other of these five centers.

Funding for Film

The Arts Council is the center responsible for film and unofficially the figure allotted to this area from the Arts Council Lottery income stands at 15%. The cash will be accessed via the Film Programme which is in the process of being established and which will fund commercial features and other large scale film projects. The jury is still out on whether or not film applications will also be able to access cash from the Arts for Everyone program which is the bottom layer of funding, part of which is earmarked for initiatives which support the commissioning of new work from the youth, community, popular and amateur sectors.

As part of its pre-Lottery remit, the Arts Council has been administering a number of film funding schemes through its Film, Video and Broadcasting Department, currently headed up by Rodney Wilson. These projects range over

Jumping Joan **by Petra Freeman, Animate!, 8 mins., 1994**
This film was inspired by the old children's rhyme. Ex-Royal College of Art student Petra Freeman created the images by painting on a hard plaster slab directly under the animation camera.

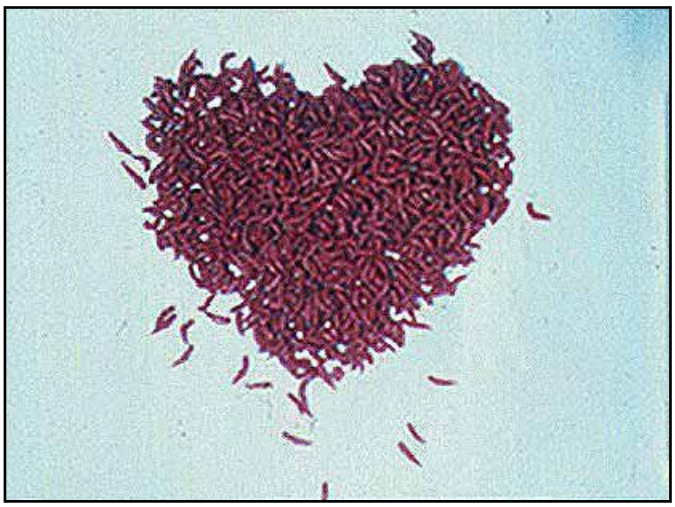
a number of areas, including documentary films about the arts and films by artists. This latter category, which includes animation, is run by Film Officer Dave Curtis, who will be known to many readers as an expert on early animation. The Lottery has impacted directly on all these programs in the following way: applications for Lottery funding for film can only be made to the Arts Council; so therefore if a particular scheme is to benefit from the Lottery, then it can no longer remain inside the funding center. As a result, Rodney Wilson will leave the Arts Council, taking all these schemes with him, and set up an agency at arms length from which he will be able to apply for Lottery money. More of this later ...

Animate!

The various schemes which have been successfully launched by Rodney Wilson and Dave Curtis are all linked in some way to television, often with a particular television company as co-investor, as well as broadcaster. In the case of animated film the relevant scheme is called Animate! which is now in its seventh year and has financed a total of 25 new works since its inception, many of which have won major international awards. This year the Arts Council's contribution to the production of animation was honored by the Zagreb World Festival of Animated Films which presented one of its most prestigious awards to Dave Curtis and the Animate! production adviser Dick Arnall. Animate! is a partnership between the Arts Council and Channel 4 (annual funding currently stands at £69,000 [$109, 365] from Channel 4 and £27,000 [$42,795] from the Arts Council) and is committed to supporting new talent and providing an opportunity for filmmakers to experiment in both form and content.

Animate! will follow Rodney Wilson out of the Arts Council into the newly-created quasi-private sector. This movement from public to private is part of a wider trend towards privitization of public services that the Tory administration has pursued relentlessly since 1979. Banner headlines greet each sale of the major utilities—water, railways, telecommunications, etc.—but less publicity attends the extensive privatization of public services previously offered through local authorities, for instance, street cleaning, building and road maintenance, healthcare, education, etc. This privatization process, known as compulsory competitive tendering, has been widely promoted by the Tories as a "value for money" policy, which ultimately relieves the public of burdensome taxes and other levies.

But beneath this acceptable face of capitalism lies a single-minded political ambition to smash the post-war settlement and replace its



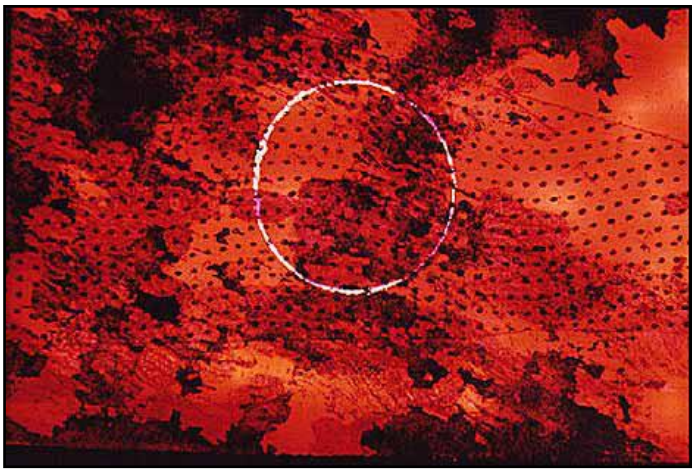
15th February **by Tim Webb, Animate! 7 mins., 1995**
Tim Webb graduated from the West Surrey College of Art and Design and now teaches in the Royal College of Art Animation Department. *15th February* mixes live action and animation to describe a symbolic rejection and its sadistic outcome as related in the poem by Peter Reading.

broad-based nurturing ideology with something more akin to a Hobbesian state of nature, a free-for-all in which everyone competes in an open market. As a result, the UK is undergoing a period of massive social change the outcome of which is only now beginning to be predictable.

Through the Trust, not only would the Animate! scheme survive, but a much wider commitment to animation in the UK would be established.

How does Animate! fit into the wider picture? Animate! is a fragile scheme, nutured within the Arts Council by Dave Curtis and within Channel 4 by Clare Kitson, Commissioning Editor for Animation—two individuals whose passion and commitment to animation have set the rigorous selection standards for the scheme which has resulted in the production of award-winning work. Animate! will pass from this warm environment into an unfriendly marketplace, where it must jostle for funding with more glamorous, high profile, commercial projects.

The first alarm bells have already rung. Over at Channel 4, the newly-appointed Controller of Arts and Entertainment, Stuart Cosgrove, has put the Animate! scheme (and other such schemes) on hold. It's a sensible move. In the first place, Cosgrove will need to ascertain what the new funding implications are for the Channel 4 budget. In principle, Animate! should receive more money from the Lottery than it previously received from the Arts Council, but this may not necessarily reduce Channel 4's contribution: in fact, it may increase it. Worse, it may make it unnecessary; in which case, Animate! would be cut loose from its personal connection with Clare Kitson and, already at arm's length from David Curtis, may drift away from first principles and lose sight of its standards. This gloomy scenario is further complicated by problems over at Channel 4, where Chief Executive, Michael Grade, is fighting a battle against privatization—more Tory dogma. Privatization will inevitably undermine the original 1982 remit of the Channel to provide innovative programming for minority audiences, a remit which was entirely appropriate to the funding of schemes such as Animate!



***Sunset Strip* by Kayla Parker, Animate! 4 minutes, 1996**
Time-lapse drawings of one year's sunsets—including those obscured by clouds—are rendered directly onto 35mm film stock using a variety of materials, including nail varnish, magnolia petals, hair and net stocking. The result is a dazzling expression of the visual music revealed by 365 setting suns.

But there may be a silver lining. What the Lottery taketh it may also giveth away! Dave Curtis has informally floated an idea for an Animation Trust, the thrust of which is to establish an entity which would support the animation community in the UK. Its major functions would be to provide a research academy, comprised of information data banks, archive material and a film and publications library, and, more importantly, an ongoing production fund. Through the Trust, not only would the Animate! scheme survive (in another form perhaps), but a much wider commitment to animation in the UK would be established. It would be able to pick up the slack from a privatized Channel 4 and sustain the talent that has been nurtured by Channel 4, the Arts Council and other similarly-threatened public funding bodies over the last decade and a half. The prodigious sums of money available from the Lottery may be used to purchase buildings, for capital expenses, personnel costs and project funding—the Animation Trust might just slip through as just one of a multitude of other hare-brained schemes. But the idea had better be floated soon before the Lottery dust settles and public accountability becomes an issue. The Government may be chuckling over its reduced public spending budget as a result of the success of the Lottery, but when the public wakes up to its own spending, then it may withdraw or question its support for schemes which are relatively unaccessible to the majority of punters.

Jill McGreal owns and runs her own London-based animation production company, CODENAME The Animation Agency. She produces television series for children and represents many well-known international directors for commercial work. She continues to write and teach about animation and film in general.

Contracts for Original Works Published on Internet

by Nicolas Valluet
Translated by William Moritz

This is the first of a series of occasional articles from attorneys from various countries around the world on problems of international law as they apply to animation. Our opening article in this series deals, appropriately enough, with the Internet and is written from a French perspective.

The putting online of an original work demands that the owner of rights to the "work" (author or assignee) specifically authorizes the online-service (publisher) to exploit it on the Internet. The existence of prior contracts forseeing the ceding of rights for certain venues without alluding to online use, is no longer sufficient grounds for the publisher to assume that he has rights to broadcast the work on the Net. The law now demands a signature on a specific Internet contract—which also has the merit of clarifying the rights of both parties.

The right to play consists of communicating the work to the public by either a direct or indirect process, such as television or the Internet.

In the eyes of the French law, this contract should include ceding the right to play the work on the Net, and usually ceding the rights to reproduction. The right to play consists of communicating the work to the public by either a direct or indirect process, such as television or the Internet. The rights to reproduction, on the other hand, gives authorization to fix the work materially, including its reproduction by printing on paper or its reproduction by a digital process in the computer's memory.

The author may refuse to cede his rights to reproduction, and demand that the publisher forbid the visitors to his site from downloading any information figuring in the work. However, since this prohibition is difficult to monitor in practice, I believe the author should negotiate for ceding the rights to reproduction.

Further issues involve the extent of the rights ceded by the contract, which include the mode of payment, the territory covered, the length of time for which the contract will be valid, and respecting of the author's moral rights.

Concerning the territory, it is illusory to limit the ceding to such and such territory considering the international nature of the Internet, and the fact that the users are hard to locate. So the attention of the parties should focus on the length of the ceding and on how the author will be remunerated.

The parties must decide between a proportional remuneration or royalty (if it were possible to calculate that) and an outright, upfront payment—or some combination of the two. Considering the difficulties in predicting and calculating remuneration proportional to the online access to a work, it is more reasonable to plan a system of outright payment to the author.

But the mode of compensation also influences the duration

The mode of compensation also influences the duration of the rights ceded.

of the rights ceded. In effect, the combination of a long-running contract with an upfront payment seems dangerous for the author, since he loses financial control of his work for a long time. Though it is theoretically possible to cede the rights for the whole duration of the copyright, commonly in the digital domain one cedes rights for a limited time, accompanied by a clause that automatically renews the contract, unless one party informs the other to the contrary. So, while there exists a freedom of choice for both parties in respect to the duration of the ceding of rights to exploit the work, a combination of upfront payment with a limited duration of the contract is favored by French jurisprudence and tenet.

Aside from proprietary rights, we must also consider the moral rights of the author, which is quite specific in continental European

law (but doesn't exist in the United States). French law poses the principle of perpetual moral rights of the author, which acts as a right beyond copyright and confers on the author rights in respect to his name, his quality and his work—and over the publication of those. These moral rights are specifically attached to the person of the author, being perpetual and inalienable, and they cannot be annulled or made void. So the moral right remains attached to the author and his heirs, who may not cede this right, but who may use it to continue the exploitation of the work after the expiration of the formal copyright. Similarly the author or his heirs may use this moral right to oppose a usage made of the work even after rights for exploitation have been contractually ceded.

In the final analysis, French law protects the interests of the author, and it is absolutely necessary that the Internet publisher obtain these rights with a contract that considers the duration of ceded rights and the mode of remuneration for them, and which is conscious of the moral rights of the author.

Nicolas Valluet is a lawyer at the Court of Paris, associated with the firm Valluet-Achache et associées, as well as president of l'Association des Avocats du Droit d'Auteur (Association of Lawyers for the Rights of Authors).

Les contrats d'exploitation d'oeuvres originales sur l'Internet

par Nicolas Valluet

Cet article est le premier d'une série d'articles ponctuels écrits par des avocats de différents pays du globe sur la législation internationale concernant l'animation. Ce premier article traite de l'exploitation d'œuvres sur l'Internet, au regard du droit francais.

La mise en ligne d'une oeuvre originale exige que le titulaire des droits sur l'oeuvre (auteur ou cessionnaire) autorise spécifiquement le diffuseur- exploitant du service en ligne à exploiter l'oeuvre sur l'Internet.

L'existence de contrats antérieurs prévoyant la cession de droits pour certains supports sans que soit visé la mise en ligne n'est pas aujourd'hui suffisante pour que le diffuseur puisse s'estimer titulaire du droit de diffuser l'oeuvre sur le réseau.

La jurisprudence tend en effet à exiger la signature d'un contrat spécifique ce qui a également le mérite de clarifier les droits des parties.

Au regard du droit français ce contrat devra comporter cession du droit de représentation de l'oeuvre sur le réseau et le plus souvent cession du droit de reproduction.

Le droit de représentation consiste dans la communication de l'oeuvre au public par un procédé quelconque direct ou indirect, comme la télévision ou l'Internet.

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De son côté le droit de reproduction emporte autorisation de fixer matériellement l'oeuvre ce qui comporte la reproduction sur support papierpar édition ou reproduction par procédé numérique dans la mémoire d'un ordinateur.

L'auteur peut refuser de céder son droit de reproduction et exiger du diffuseur qu'il interdise le téléchargement par les visiteurs du site des informations figurant sur son serveur toutefois cette interdiction sera difficile à mettre en

oeuvre techniquement ce qui milite à mon sens en faveur de la cession du droit de reproduction.

Se pose alors les questions liées à l'étendue des droits cédés dans le cadre du contrat ce qui comprend en particulier le mode de rémunération, le territoire, la durée de cession et le respect du droit moral de l'auteur.

Il convient de passer en revue les principeaux points à négocier entre les parties pour la conclusion du contrat de cession de droits.

L'attention des parties doit être portée sur la durée de cession et sur le mode de rémunération de l'auteur.

Concernant le territoire, il est illusoire de limiter la cession à tel ou tel territoire compte tenu du caractère international de l'Internet et de ses utilisateurs qui pose des difficultés matérielles de localisation.

L'attention des parties doit donc être portée sur la durée de cession et sur le mode de rémunération de l'auteur.

C'est ainsi que les parties doivent se décider entre une rémunération proportionelle si son calcul est possible et une rémunération forfaitaire ou encore la combinaison des deux.

Compte tenu des difficultées à prévoir pour le calcul de la rémunération proportionelle lors de la mise en ligne d'une oeuvre, il est plus rationel de prévoir un système de rémunération forfaitaire de l'auteur.

A ce stade il est indispensable de se pencher sur l'influence du mode de rémunération de l'auteur sur la durée des droits cédés.

En effet, la conjugaison d'une cession de longue durée et d'une rémunération forfaitaire apparaît comme dangereuse pour l'auteur puisqu'il perd le contrôle financier de son travail pour une longue durée.

Car s'il est théoriquement possible de céder les droits pour toute la durée de protection du droit d'auteur il est d'usage dans le domaine numérique de prévoir une durée de cession limitée assortie le cas échéant d'une clause de reconduction automatique sauf dénonciation par l'une ou l'autre des parties.

En synthèse, on peut dire qu'il existe une liberté de choix pour les parties relativement à la durée de cession des droits d'exploitation de l'oeuvre mais que le système associant une rémunération forfaitaire avec une durée de cession limitée à les faveurs de la jurisprudence et de la doctrine française.

A côté des droits patrimoniaux, il convient enfin de se pencher sur
le droit moral de l'auteur qui est une spécificité du droit continental européen qui n'existe pas aux Etats-Unis.

Le droit français pose le principe de l'incessibilité du droit moral de l'auteur qui s'analyse comme un droit extra-patrimonial et confère à l'auteur le droit au respect de son nom, de sa qualité et de son oeuvre et sur la divulgation de cette dernière.

Le droit moral a la particularité d'être attaché à la personne de l'auteur, d'être perpétuel, inaliénable et imprescriptible.

Le droit moral reste donc attaché à l'auteur et à ses héritiers qui ne peuvent le céder et qui disposent donc d'un droit de regard sur l'exploitation de l'oeuvre après la cession éventuelles de leurs droits patrimoniaux.

C'est ainsi que l'auteur ou ses héritiers peuvent s'opposer à l'usage qui est fait de l' oeuvre après la cession des droits d'exploitation.

Il résulte de ce qui précède que le droit français est protecteur des intérêts de l'auteur et qu'il est indispensable que le diffuseur tire ses droits d'un contrat écrit prévoyant la durée et le mode de rémunération de la cession et qu'il ait conscience de l'existence du droit moral de l'auteur.

Nicolas Valluet est avocat à la Cour de Pareis, associé du cabinet Valluet-Achache et associés ainsi que Président de l'Association des Avocats du Droit d'Auteur.

Betty Boop:

The Definitive Collection

Republic Pictures has just released a boxed set of almost all the extant Fleischer Betty Boop shorts as *Betty Boop: The Definitive Collection.* One of her early films, *Accordion Joe,* seems to have been inadvertently left out, while Republic did not have the rights to *Popeye the Sailor,* an official Boop film in which she only appears briefly, and to four other late films which are mostly lost: *Pudgy and the Lost Kitten, Buzzy Boop* (which does exist in some poor 16mm prints), *Buzzy Boop at the Concert* and *Honest Love and True.* (Buzzy is Betty's 12-year-old niece.). Also, one film, *Romantic Melodies* is presented in a black & white print of a colorized version of the film, though better material certainly exists. Also, the films are arranged thematically, rather than chronologically, which is somewhat off-putting, given the lack of proper liner notes.

Despite its flaws, the collection is an invaluable resource for both animation buffs and historians, as it provides the first large scale collection of films from the Fleischer Studios available in video; however, it is a shame that it was not issued in laserdisc format (which seems to have been the original intent) and that it lacks any program notes worthy of the name. (Thus, the only listing of the films is on the box for each tape and there is no information on release dates.) For this, the blame must fall on Republic's shoulders, rather than on Jerry Beck, who nominally curated the set, and who certainly would have preferred to do otherwise.

Betty Boop: The Definitive Collection

Betty, who celebrated her 65th birthday last year, is rightly celebrated as the first major female cartoon star. Based on the persona of singer Helen Kane, she was initially designed by the legendary Grim Natwick (possibly assisted by Ted Sears), who also animated Betty in her screen debut, *Dizzy Dishes* (1930).

Who exactly had the original idea for creating Boop is not exactly clear. Natwick stated that Dave Fleischer brought him a piece of sheet music with a picture of Kane on it and instructed him to make her into a cartoon character. However, the idea may just as well have come from Paramount Pictures, Fleischer's distributor and who also had Helen Kane under contract. (Kane later protested, suing both Fleischer and Paramount for damages, but failed to convince the judge and lost.)

What is known is that Paramount was eager for Fleischer Studios to come up with a viable cartoon star to compete with the likes of Mickey Mouse. During the silent period, the studio had relied on Koko the Clown, who dated back to Max and Dave Fleischer's first films and whose popularity, as Mark Langer has pointed out to me, paled besides that of someone like Felix the Cat. The Fleischers initially came up with Bimbo, the dog, but without much success.

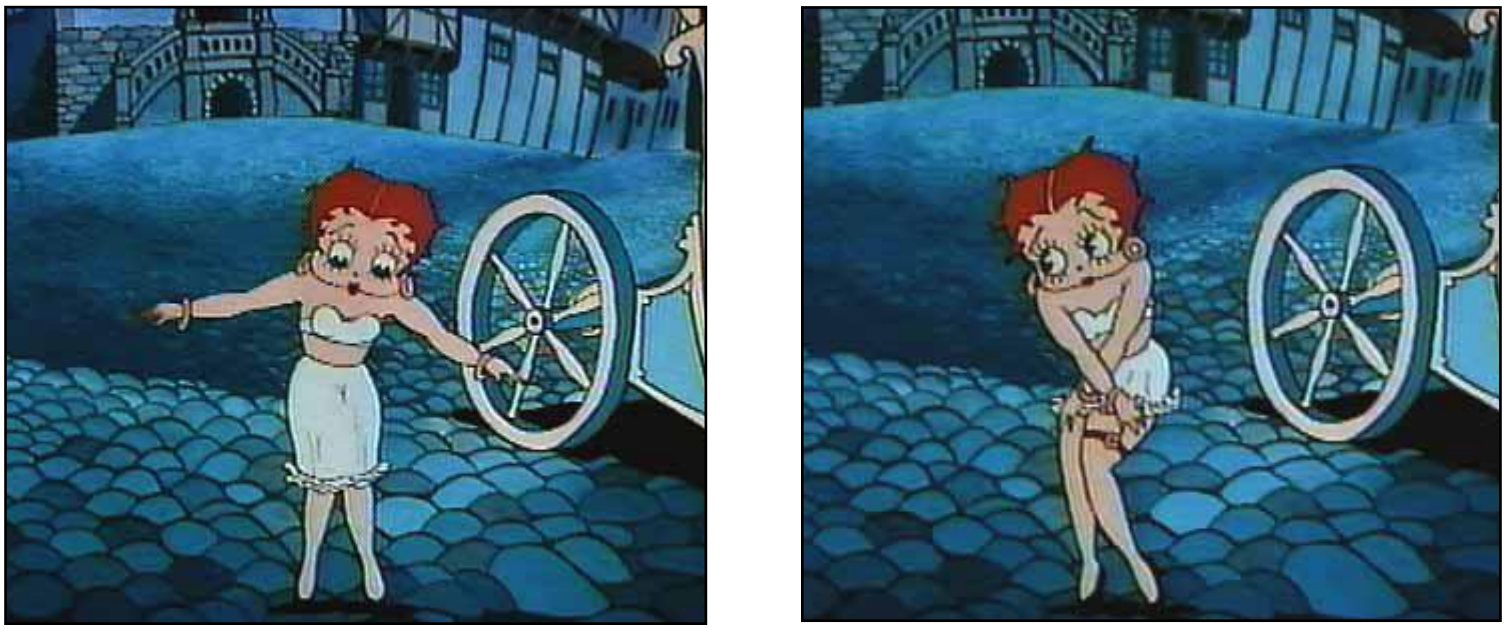
Willard Bowsky's *The Mysterious Mose* (Fleischer, 1930), one of Betty Boop's first films showing her early sex appeal.

Betty, though, was another story and was an instant hit.

(For the rest of its existence, the Fleischers were unable to come up with any other original cartoon characters that gained any substantial degree of popularity. Its other major stars were Popeye and Superman, both of whom had gained their initial fame in comic strips and comic books!)

It's also interesting that Betty's early films were basically designed more for adults than for kids. (When Max Fleischer's son, Richard was trying to peddle the idea of Betty Boop feature a few years ago, he found it difficult to convince Hollywood executives that her films were originally not made for kids.) And when the Production Code Administration clamped down on her risque ways, many felt that the changeover took much of her spunk away. (Lillian Friedman, the first women animator, who worked on many of Betty's films, agreed with this assessment.) A number of her later films (especially the ones featuring Grampy), however, are not without their charms. But for most, films such as Bimbo's Initiation, Snow-White and the spectacular Poor Cinderella are what Betty is all about. And for now, the best place to find them on video is in this collection, which is priced at US$69.95 for eight tape boxed set.

Harvey Deneroff has written extensively on the Fleischer Studios, where his father, Joe Deneroff, worked as an inbetweener in both New York and Miami., including a number of Betty Boop films.



Seymour Kneitel's *Poor Cinderella* (Fleischer, 1934), was the first color film for both Betty and Fleischer. A large scale spectacle, it showcased Max Fleischer's new three-dimensional process, in which animation was photographed against miniature sets.

FESTIVAL REVIEW

Ottawa International Animation Festival

by Gene Walz

If you like to second-guess jury decisions, Ottawa '96 was the perfect animation festival for you. Almost as good as the O.J. Simpson trial. Even the Grand Prize Winner engaged in some public second-guessing.

When Russian animator Igor Kovalyov came forward to accept his best film of the festival trophy for Bird in the Window, he was suitably gracious if somewhat stunned. He thought Priit Parn would win it for his film 1895.

This was the perfect ending to an enjoyable animation festival that featured some peculiar choices for inclusion in the competition, several surprising prize-winners, and no clearly outstanding triumphs. So it was easy to second-guess things here.

I'm not suggesting in any way that the jury was less than competent or that Bird in the Window was an unworthy winner or that the festival's line-up was skimpy.

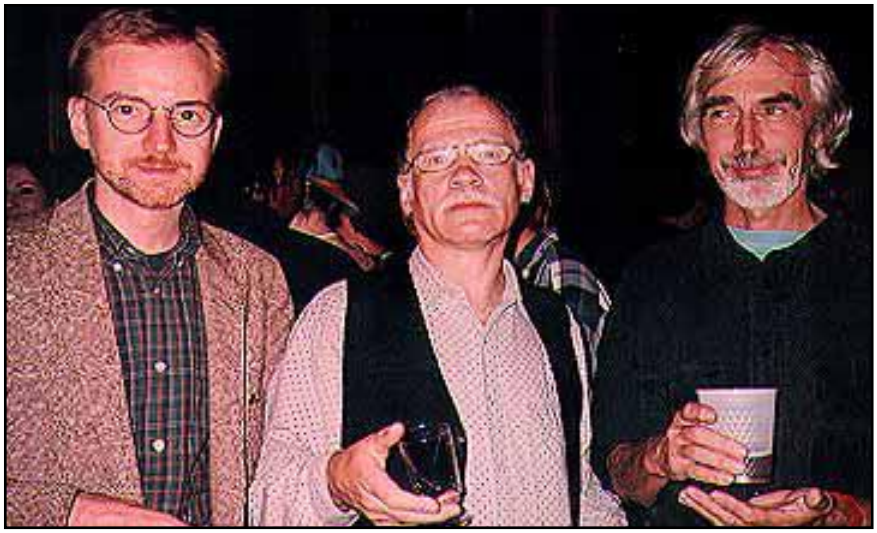
On the contrary, Kovalyov's film was richly designed and intriguingly plotted. The festival itself was crammed with good movies that were, given certain limitations, well-programmed. And, in determining the awards, the jury was impressively skillful and diplomatic in finding ways to ensure that no one felt cheated. Second-guessing is much easier when first choices aren't very obvious, when no one dominates. That was the case at Ottawa this year.

Second-guessing is much easier when first choices aren't very obvious, when no one dominates.

First Films

Surprisingly, the most competitive category of all had to be the one for first films. The National Film Board of Canada-sponsored award in this category went to Mike Booth for his five-minute film The Saint Inspector. Amusingly described in the program as the story of "a higher being in a state of pious bliss [who] endures the attention of a meddling official", this bizarre and irreverent film proves that England is securing its future as the model-animation capital of the world. Yet few people in the audience would have objected if any one of the nine other films in the category had been given the prize. The overall quality was that good.

The jury indicated just how good by giving special mention to two other first films—to the boldly black and white (no colors, no greys even) film Tale about the Cat and the Moon by Pedro Serragina which takes anthropomorphism in a slightly different direction, and to the elusive Lazarus by Vanessa Cruz. More revealingly, two other films from this category, the hilarious Hilary and the equally funny Gagarin, already recognized at other animation festivals, were multiple award winners in the craft and media areas here. (And Da DA, also a first-time effort, was not entered in this category.) So it looks like the near future of the art of animation is very bright.



Ottawa award winners, Igor Kovalyov, Pritt Parn and Paul Dressien

In case you haven't already heard, Gagarin by Russian animator Alexij Kharitidi features a cute Disney-style bug who has a taste for adventure. During a badminton

The Warner Bros. crew at the Ottawa Picnic: Standing (left to right): Piet Kroon, Allison Abate, Ron Tippe; sitting (left to right): Tom Knott, Babs Parent, Dave Master, Catherine Winder and Ellen Cockrill (Universal).

game he hitches a ride inside the shuttlecock. The story switches to his point of view as he is batted back and forth between the badminton players. The cel-animation here is expertly rendered, the overall timing is marvelous, and the humor warm and refreshing. It won craft prizes for animation and humor.

Hilary by Michael Hodgeson, another British model animator, is an offbeat bedtime story told by a cynical dad as he takes his bewildered young son on a weird trip to slumberland. While the animation of the two main characters is pretty elementary, the trick of concentrating on the background details and the jaded attitude of the father's tale more than compensate. The clever writing won it prizes for best story and for most popular film in audience polling.

If there were any films at Ottawa '96 which, on the basis of awards, inched ahead of the rest, *Gagarin* and *Hilary* were the ones. And they were first-time films. Does this mean that the all's right in the animation world? I'll leave the second-guessing to you.

Then There Were Shorts

Combination Skin, Hodgeson's second film in the festival, proves just how competitive the short animation (under 10 minutes) category was. In this slight variation on *Hilary,* a mother babbles at her wide-eyed son in an eerily dank-looking reptile house. Although the narrative is equally quirky and the puppet animation a decided advance on *Hilary* (if somewhat more conventional), *Combination Skin* could only garner a special mention. It and Piet Kroon's *Da DA,* a well-drawn but predictable parable about conformity and parental competitiveness, lost out to on of the more curious choices at the festival—*Joe's Apartment: Funky Towel* by Chris Wedge.

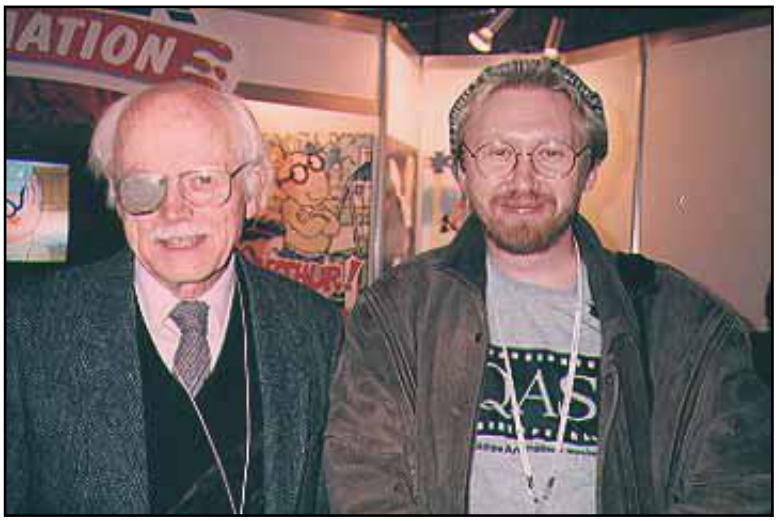
A zany send-up of Esther Williams' synchronized swimming musicals of the 1940s, *Funky Towel* choreographs cockroaches in a filthy toilet bowl. While it is based on a great premise and is nicely orchestrated, some audience members wondered why it wasn't in the promotional works category since it is a music video excerpted from a feature film. Not exactly controversial, but it did lead to some lively discussions.

As did the additional prizes awarded in the short animation category. Alice Stevens' *Yellow Shoes,* a mock documentary that could easily have won the educational category (where, oddly, no prize was presented) was cited for outstanding design. Vuk Jevremovic's *The Wind Subsides* was singled out for its energetic line drawings of wild animals running. As was Petra Freeman for the unusual technique of *Jumping Joan,* an award that was met by many quizzical looks from the crowd.

Over 10s

In another tell-tale indication of the current state of animation, five out of the six films entered in the over-ten-minute category were designated for recognition of some sort. What this means is hard to fathom—unless you were the unfortunate sixth entrant.

Paul Driessen's *The End of the World in Four Seasons,* with 8 and 9 images competing for the viewer's attention at the same time, took the category prize. By doing so, he somewhat redeemed the NFB's reputation, which had been tarnished more than a little by having all but two of its films rejected for the competition in its home country. The



Frédéric Back and Kevin Kurytnick (Quickdraw Animation Society).

other NFB production, Robert Doucet's stirringly beautiful folktale Flying Canoe won the best Canadian film award; so the NFB went two for two (or maybe 2 for 20).

Priit Parn's amusing but perhaps overlong twisted-history of the Lumiere Brothers before they invented cinema, 1895, won a special prize for design. And Wat's Pig, a dauntingly detailed, often split-screened medieval story of a ruler and his poor, misplaced twin, done in claymation by Peter Lord, helped win Aardman Animations a Special Jury Prize. It was a pretty good year for long-form animation.

Hubert Tison (President ASIFA-Canada), Louise Beaudet (Ottawa Honorary President), Andrea Mancia (Museum of Modern Art Film Archives)

Promos, Educational & TV

The most bloated category in the entire festival, not surprisingly in this overly and overtly commercialized era, was the promos and ads category. Twenty-two productions were in the running for prizes.

In a refreshing challenge to the predominance of brassy, computer-generated, 3D modeling, the first prize was given to Winnipeg animator Cordell Barker for his simple animated doodles on Quebec telephone bills. For those of you wondering about what happened to this Oscar-nominee (for The Cat Came Back), the award shows that he has not lost his touch; he's just narrowed his audience and temporarily succumbed to the lure of advertising.

The most bloated category in the entire festival, not surprisingly in this overly and overtly commercialized era, was the promos and ads category.

As if further evidence is needed for the current state of affairs in animation, the promos and ads category had almost as many entries as the final four categories: children's, educational, made-for-television, and episodic television. Two of these categories (educational and episodic TV) were (arguably) too underrepresented for the jury to decide on an award. Whether this means that good stuff is not being done or whether it is just not making its way to Ottawa or whatever, is where the good second-guessing comes in.

In the made-for television competition, Nick Park's latest Wallace and Gromit story, A Close Shave was clearly more ambitious than its two main competitors Johnny Bravo and Raging Rudolf.

Johnny Bravo, a cel-animation about an over-muscled, politically incorrect Elvis look-alike with blond hair, is already slated to be a TV series, but it was less interesting than some of the other Cartoon Network material. Raging Rudolf is a clever retelling of the Christmas reindeer's story in terms of Scorsesean profanity, intimidation-tactics, and gore.

As amusing and precise as Nick Park's previous efforts, A Close Shave was missing some, perhaps indefinable, quality. It pits the hard-working Gromit against a sheep-napping, controlling pet of a knitting-store owner with whom Wallace the inveterate inventor is smitten. While it is marvelously inventive and pleasing, it is already too familiar to legitimately claim "Best of Show" awards.

Likewise the Simpsons episode Treehouse of Horror VI: Homer 3D which, despite its computer-generated graphics and Tron references, was neither as funny nor as biting as the best episodes of this series can be. Still, the jury selected it, in an unprecedented twinning of the Grand Prize, as the winner for Best Television Production. Intriguingly, there was no prize in The Simpsons' regular category. Plenty of room for speculation and second-guessing there.

If the competition part of the festival was not quite up to the quality of some previous festivals, the rest of the events at Ottawa '96 were spectacularly successful.

In Retrospect

Retrospectives of the works of German animator Raimund Krumme, Estonia's Priit Parn, the incomparable Shamus Culhane

A late night *Animation World Network* demo at Chez Ani. Pictured left to right, Gunnar Strøm, Otto Adler and friend, and Gerben Schermer.
Photo by Frankie Kowalski

who labored in many of Hollywood's animation factories, Kaj Pindal and Derek Lamb from the NFB, and especially Fedor Chitruk from Russia not only showcased the immense talents of these animation giants; they also showed, inevitably, how indebted many of today's animators are to their work (including festival winner Kovalyov) and how alert many other animators should be to their techniques and especially their storytelling mastery.

Screenings of rare Israeli and Mexican animation were less rewarding, except to show that Israel was influenced too by UPA, and Mexican animators can do full frontal nudity and sex better than anyone.

A salute to Nelvana Studios of Toronto, a sampling of the Cartoon Network's new shorts (previously unavailable in Canada, although already hits with many of the Americans in the audience), and the premiere of the NFB's new feature animation *La Plante Humaine* all served as welcome tonics to the crushingly opportunistic previews of Warner Bros.' break-the-bank Michael Jordan film *Space Jam* and Disney's latest ventures into feature-length advertising for plastic merchandise available at McDonalds.

The highlights of the festival for me were the screenings of Greg Ford's long-awaited documentary *Freleng: Frame by Frame* and the personal favorites chosen by Honorary President Louise Beaudet from the vaults of the Cinémathèque Québécoise.

Ford's thorough examination of the contribution of Friz Freleng has to be the best study of animation ever filmed. Freleng has too long taken a back seat to his more garrulous Warner Bros. contemporaries. With many examples from classic films, Ford demonstrates why Freleng's flawless sense of timing and unsurpassed use of music should give him pride of place at Termite Terrace. This was long overdue and well worth the wait.

Joanna Priestly (animator and Ottawa jury member) and Chris Robinson (Festival Director) at the closing party in the Parliament Building.

Louise Beaudet's program featured exquisite prints of some remarkable artistic animations. Oscar Fischinger's wonderful 1937 *An Optical Poem* with its lovely geometrics, two of Lejf Marcussen's hard-to-see films *The Public Voice* and *Lederkonkurrence*, the legendary *Frank Film* and UPA's excellent *The Telltale Heart* (both firsts for me on the big screen), as well as the incomparable *The Thieving Magpie* were but a few of Beaudet's fine choices. They will provide lasting memories for me.

Pumpkin contenders at the Ottawa Annual Picnic. Photo by Frankie Kowalski

Mexican animators can do full frontal nudity and sex better than anyone.

In this day of inane cartoons for TV, ritualistic cloning of empty successes, and the relentless throb of rampant commercialization (all of them in evidence at Ottawa '96—this was a festival with a wide sweep), it is invigorating to see that undeniable masterpieces are still allowed to share the program.

The Ottawa International Animation Festival may be known far and wide for its pumpkin-carving picnic and its opening and closing night parties (in a grunge bar called The Cave, complete with enough pool tables to let even the neophytes at AWN compete, and then in the actual Canadian Parliament buildings, no less). It's also renowned for its willingness to combine the business of recruiting with the necessities of useful workshops (a great one on the making of the *3D Homer*) and the pleasures of seeing new animation. All of these things, plus the generous sampling of works from the masters, have made this the "festival of choice" for many animation fans. There's no second-guessing that.

Gene Walz is head of the film program at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg. He is currently finishing a biography on character designer Charlie Thorson and is now editing a book called Great Canadian Films.

FESTIVAL REVIEW

Brisbane Animation Festival

by David Marshall

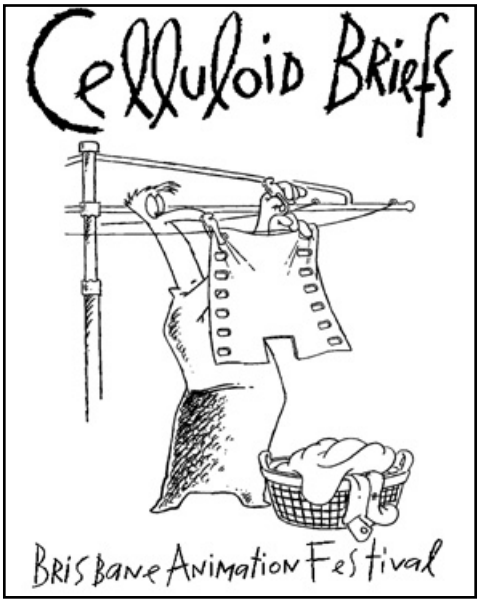
Festivals are wonderful places to discover the like-minded and the like-minded wannabes. The debut of the Brisbane Animation Festival, cheekily entitled Celluloid Briefs, drew the vibrant Queensland animation community and the lovers of animation to revel in two days of flickering projected images. And, it appears from the success of this first time out, it will be, as the organizers have promised, a biennial event.

The festival provided an insight into the locations where independent productions may be commissioned, or at the very least exhibited to the largest audiences.

Brisbane, a city of about one and a half million has a surprisingly active animation group. With 260 members in the Queensland Animators Group, the organization is certainly on the cutting edge of the Australian animation scene. After last year's loud, spectacular and cacophonic Kaboom exhibition curated by Philip Brophy at the Sydney Powerhouse Museum, the Brisbane setting and its festival offered a much more theatrical exhibition of international animation. The subtropical environment fulfilled its promise by keeping the general feel of the festival unpretentious, relaxed and accommodating to both the cognoscenti and the newly initiated. The Schonell Theatre, located on the idyllic grounds of the University of Queensland, was the comfortable site of the Festival where the usual crowd of about 200 attended most of the sessions on offer.

Short Filled Sessions

The weekend was organized into five sessions filled with shorts. What made the festival somewhat differently focused was that several of these sessions were guest curated by television producers and executives involved in showcasing animation. Clare Kitson, Head of Animation at the United Kingdom's Channel 4, and Joy Toma, executive producer of the experimental showcase Eat Carpet program from



the Australian Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), were two of the invited special presenters. The festival thus provided an insight into the locations where independent productions may be commissioned, or at the very least exhibited to the largest audiences.

The Saturday "matinee" session, Kids' Stuff, curated by Dina Browne (from the Festival of Australian Television), featured a retrospective of recent animation from Europe, Canada and Australia. Particularly impressive were the celebrated and endearing Barbro Hallstom's Mr. Bohm and the Herring (Sweden), the computer-animated and mesmerizing Pencil Dance and Michèle Cournoyer's emotively promotional An Artist (Canada). The naive style of Trace Balla's Hungary-to-Australia immigration saga, Lilly and the Yellow Cake, was a compelling, simple story. Featured in the selection was the Australian children's international animation showcase program Babble-on from SBS.

The Queensland Animator's Group culled world animation for a provocative second session. Barflies, the stop-motion production by the Australian director Stuart MacDonald, about two drunken flies playing chicken with a fly-zapper was absolutely hilarious and is a must-see. Award-winning productions populated this session including: Rybcynski's highly choreographed trick film, Tango, where events are sequentially layered on top of each other in a fixed space; Fleischer's Minnie the Moocher; and the computer animated Joe and Basket by Germany's Peter Scarab. Chuck Jones' melodramatic What's Opera Doc? completed the world tour.

Day Two

The tribute to Hollywood's creative source for animation presented by the Australian National Cinematheque launched day two. The session developed a thesis about the kinetic, some-

time slapstick, counter-aesthetic to Disney's verisimilitude emerging from the animation units of competing studios (particularly Warner's) from the 1930s to 1950s. Bob Clampett's politically irreverent, visually compelling and overtly adult *Coal Black and the Seben Dwarfs* was a personal highlight. Clampett's Abbott and Costello-inspired *Tale of Two Kitties* produced what I would cite as the best line of the festival. As two cats are attempting to capture Tweety Bird (his debut film), the Costello character mutters in double-code: "I'll get the bird—if the Hays Office would let me."

The fourth session was presented by SBS' *Eat Carpet* showcase program. Alison Snowden and David Fine's 1995 Oscar-winning *Bob's Birthday,* with British-mannered humor about middle class and middle age was delicious. An episode of the ambitious 3-D computer animated *The Quarks Quandary*, by French director Maurice Benayoun was shown, which demonstrated the need with computer animation to have a compelling story to carry the impressive technical feats. The South African drawn animation, *Captive of the City* (William Kentridge) provided a perplexing closure to the session with its depiction of the manoeuvring of megabusinessman Soho Eckstein and was mesmerising in its sweeping movements of shades and figures.

We were left with images without placing where they have come from and why they were grouped together.

The closing Sunday session allowed for the showcasing of British animation through Claire Kitson's Channel 4 curation. Certainly, the swirling and transforming images of *Triangle* (Erica Russell) provided the most compelling images in its rhythmic flow depicting a love triangle. Paul Vester's *Abductees* blended the documentary with parodic glee, in a film that attempted to artistically represent the varied stories of Americans who have been abducted by aliens. Completely on the other side of the fence, Tim Webb's use of animation to depict the world of autistic children through their drawings, in *A is for Autism,* was wonderfully original in its efforts to document their altered reality states. The technical engineering of the stop-motion masterpiece *Screen*

Key festival organizers, from left to right: Jane Creasy (Festival Coordinator), Peter Moyes (Festival Coordinator), Darren Hughes (President, Queensland Animators Group), Clare Kitson (Channel 4 UK), Max Bannah (independent animator), and Jonathon Dawson (Associate Professor, Pacific School of Screen Production).

Play by Barry Purves is deserving of further viewing as it presents and then suddenly radically subverts our expectations of a traditional Japanese tale of love.

In the finale, the Queensland Animators Group exhibited two beautiful productions: Eva Steegmayer's *Ah Pook is Here,* narrated by the distinctive vocals of William Burroughs, provided a dystopian description of the order of death. To provide a yang to this ying, the festival closed with Priit Parn's Grand Prix-winning *1895*, a quirky, subjective, humorous history of the origin of cinema.

Out of Context

There were some noticeable gaps in this year's inaugural festival. Oddly, there was no Asian animation, which has a high level of significance in the aesthetics of contemporary Australian work. The emphasis on the television sites of exhibition made the sessions perhaps too decontextualized; as a result, we were left with images without placing where they have come from and why they were grouped together. Future programming may benefit from a more designed pattern of selection than how they were exhibited for the various television programs. Although there was no ghettoization of Australian and local animation, there was also no session which specifically highlighted its recent achievements. Organizers, including Darren Hughes of the Queensland Animators Group, indicated this would definitely be part of the plan for the next festival.

What made the festival doubly enjoyable for many participants was the National Animation Conference held at Griffith University on the Friday and Saturday. The conference was decidedly production and exhibition oriented and allowed for some worthwhile discussions of the transforming commercial environment in animation.

The Brisbane Animation Festival has all of the ingredients of becoming a major event on the international and national calendar. Watch for it in future and plan for a visit to the Antipodes with Brisbane Australia as your gateway in 1998.

David Marshall is the Director of the Media and Cultural Studies Centre at the University of Queensland in Brisbane and writes and lectures on television, film and popular culture. He is the author of Celebrity and Power *(University of Minnesota) to be released in March 1997. The Queensland Animators Group can be contacted through their website: http://www.gu.edu.au/gext/anim/anim.htm.*

Society for Animation Studies
8th Annual Conference

by Harvey Deneroff

I find that the annual conferences of the Society for Animation Studies (SAS) is one of those necessities of life that refreshes both the mind and the spirit. While they may often lack the scale and frenetic energy that one encounters at festivals (although their second conference was held in conjunction with Ottawa '90) or even at a conference of the 1200-member Society for Cinema Studies (SCS), that's not the point. SAS is still a fairly modest-sized organization, whose membership generally lurks under 150. However, if you want to know what's going on in animation history, theory and criticism, SAS is the place to go. But then I'm biased, since I started SAS back in 1987 and was its president for several years.

This year's event, which focused on "Japanese Animation and Global Media" and was held at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, September 25-29, had a special meaning for me. Back in 1984, I had come to Madison to present my first conference paper at an SCS conference. Originally, I was to be part of a panel on animation, but it did not make and I and another panelist were placed elsewhere.

The idea that there were only two acceptable proposals seemed absurd, as I knew there were a lot more animation scholars out there. But somehow the Society for Cinema Studies, for all its power and prestige, was unable to draw them out of the woodwork. It was an incident that eventually led me, with the help of other like-minded people, to start SAS. (One of those like-minded people was Russell Merritt, who helped run the 1984 conference!) And sure enough, when the first SAS conference was held at UCLA in 1989, some 40 (academic and independent) scholars and filmmakers showed up from around the world to participate. (Total attendance at the three day event was over 100.)

There were a large number of mainstream cinema studies superstars who mostly spoke with considerable passion on anime!

Since then, schools in the US, Canada and England have played host to SAS each year, sometimes in conjunction with local film archives and festivals. As a result, other organizations, including SCS and the Asian Cinema Studies Society, have opened their arms wider to animation, as have mainstream academic journals.

The organizer for this year's event was Donald Crafton, whose pioneering history of silent animation, *Before Mickey* (1982), helped provide a solid academic footing to the field. While the conference was not the biggest in SAS history, Crafton did bring in a large number of mainstream cinema studies superstars, most of whom inevitably spoke with considerable passion on anime!

What It's All About

After a half day of screenings and a tour of Wisconsin Center for Film & Theater Research, the conference proper began on Thursday, September 26, with a panel on Animation Technology, featuring papers by Richard Leskosky and Carolyn Shaffer on the history of the Mutoscope and the technology of puppet animation respectively. Both presentations were embellished by a constant interchange in which the audience seemed to collaborate with the panelists in the process of their historical research. This, after all, is what academic conferences are really all about, as researchers test their findings and hunches with their colleagues before going public.

With the exception of Brian Camp (who spoke on "The Evolution of *Street Fighter:* From Video Game to Spiritual Quest"), the anime papers were mostly given by people who were not specialists in Japanese animation. However, many were expert in Japanese live-action films and helped put the development of anime in a different perspective. This was especially evident in David Bordwell's "Stylistic Transformations Between Live-Action and Animation in Japanese Cinema," as well as David Dresser's "Why

Anime?," which dealt with anime's rise against the background of the decline of Japanese live-action cinema. On the other hand, Rei Okamoto, who specializes in wartime literature of Japan, provided some new insights into Momotaro—Divine Troops of the Ocean, that nicely complemented Fred Patten's piece on the film in the September issue of Animation World Magazine.

Outside of anime, there were the usual mix of papers exploring the familiar and unveiling the little known. Thus, Mark Langer revealed his researches into the silhouette films of Canada's Bryant Fryer, while John A. Lent provided a historical overview of Korean animation (which, not surprisingly, has been heavily influenced by anime). At the same time, Hank Sartin talked about "Bugs Bunny and the Problem of Stardom" and Christopher Sieving presented "A Social Analysis of MGM's Tom and Jerry Cartoons."

Helping explain twhat the hell squash and stretch is all about—something which is not as obvious as it may seem.

Lelsie Bishko shared her experiences in using Laban's dance notation system in helping explain to computer animation students what the hell squash and stretch is all about—something which is perhaps not as obvious as it may seem. Sybil DelGaudio explored the almost forgotten training films which gave UPA and John Hubley their start, while Mikhail Gurevich looked at the nature of "Literary Animation" in a series of Russian films based on the drawings and writings of Aleksander Pushkin.

This year's screenings did not offer the rarities provided in years past by the likes of the UCLA Film & TV Archive and the George Eastman House, but some (like the Popeye retrospective) proved useful. The James Whitney Retrospective, though, proved much more than that, especially given William Moritz' thoughtful accompanying lecture.

But above all, the conference once again proved a great place to meet friends, find out what's going on and even do business. (Editors from five academic journals were present, including myself.) In other words, SAS is doing exactly what I was hoping it would do when it began nine years ago.

Next year's conference will be hosted by the Nederlands Institute for Animation Film under the direction of Ton Crone, and will most likely be held in Amsterdam; in 1997, the venue will switch to California's Orange County, up-the-road a bit from Disneyland at Chapman University, under the guidance of Maureen Furniss (editor of Animation Journal).

For more information on SAS check out its home page at: http://www.awn.com/sas/index.html.

Harvey Deneroff, in addition to his duties as Editor of Animation World Magazine, *edits and publishes* The Animation Report, *an industry newsletter, which can be reached at deneroff@pacbell.net. He is also Editor-In-Chief of* Animation Review, *AWN's new peer reviewed academic journal and serves on the Society for Animation Studies' Steering Committee.*

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DESERT ISLAND SERIES

Please keep your arms in the vehicle while the ride is in motion!

compiled by Frankie Kowalski

It is a thrill a minute with these folks who, in one way or another, have been involved with theme park animation: Scott Ross, founder Digital Domain; Jane Baer, Principal, The Baer Animation Company; and Bob Rogers, Chairman/CEO, BRC Imagination Arts.

Scott Ross' top 10 picks...

"Shooting a film in 3D is like taking an experimental weapon to a war."

1. *Lawrence of Arabia* by David Lean
2. *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* by Giuseppe Tornatore
3. *Ghost in the Shell* by Mamoru Oshii
4. *It's a Wonderful Life* by Frank Capra
5. *The Godfather, Parts 1 & 2* by Francis Ford Coppola
6. *Citizen Kane* by Orson Welles
7. *The Deer Hunter* by Michael Cimino
8. *Pinocchio* by Walt Disney
9. *Witness For the Prosecution* by Billy Wilder
10. *Avalon* by Barry Levinson

Jane Baer's picks...

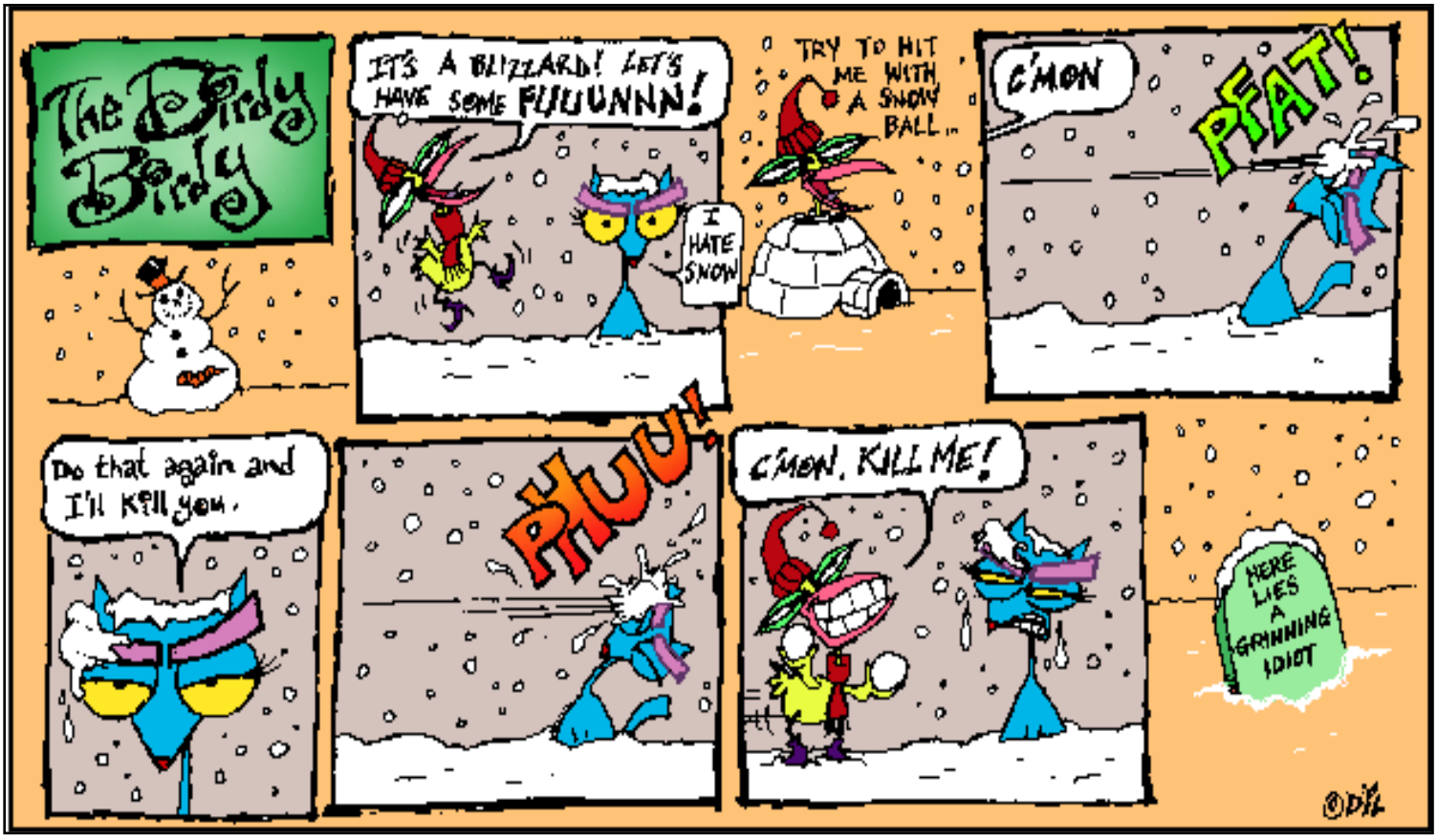
1. *Crac!* and *The Mighty River* by Frédéric Back
2. *Fantasia* by Walt Disney
3. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* by Jim Sharman
4. *Harold and Maude* by Hal Ashby
5. Every episode of *Absolutely Fabulous*
6. Every episode of *Mr. Bean*
7. *Picnic at Hanging Rock* by Peter Weir
8. *The Godfather Part 1* by Francis Ford Coppola
9. *Bambi* by Walt Disney
10. *Pinocchio* by Walt Disney
11. *The Rescuers* by Walt Disney
12. *Where's Poppa* by Carl Reiner

Bob Roger's picks...

1. *Destry Rides Again* by George Marshall
2. *Dumbo* by Walt Disney
3. *The General* by Buster Keaton
4. *High Noon* by Fred Zinneman
5. *The Kid Brother* (Harold Lloyd) by Lewis Milestone, J.A. Howe, Lex Neal & Ted Wilde
6. *Peter Pan* by Walt Disney
7. *Singing in the Rain* by Stanley Donen & Gene Kelly
8. *Sons of the Desert* (Laurel & Hardy) by William Seiter
9. *Sullivan's Travels* by Preston Sturges
10. *The Wizard of Oz* by Victor Fleming

Bob Rogers, Chairman/CEO, BRC Imagination Arts.

AWN Comics



The Dirdy Birdy by John R. Dilworth

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Wallace and Gromit Conquer America

by Mark Segall

New York City, October 22, 1996—In contrast to the gaudy surroundings of New York's Tavern on the Green restaurant in Central Park, British animation phenomenon Nick Park's entrance is anything but ostentatious. The press corps doesn't even notice the three-time Oscar winner bending down to open a black foam lined case to remove the plasticine figures of the buck-toothed, bald-headed Wallace and his long-suffering best friend Gromit the dog. When Wallace and Gromit's second half-hour adventure The Wrong Trousers aired on BBC2 Christmas day 1993, 3.3 million UK viewers tuned in. At Easter time those numbers more than doubled—something that just isn't supposed to happen on a repeat. Thirty-nine percent of all British screens were tuned to Park's animated comedy. On Christmas Eve 1995, the third Wallace and Gromit short, A Close Shave, pulled in 42% of the UK audience, beating out the year's biggest sports matches to become BBC2's most popular program of 1995.

While Wallace and Gromit are superstars at home, they almost got lost in New York. The cabbie who brought Park to his hotel in a torrential downpour two nights earlier hurried away with the models still in the trunk. When this calamity made the TV news, he quickly returned them. To commemorate this miraculous rescue, today's publicity event kicks off with NYC's Taxi and Limousine Commissioner extolling cab drivers and welcoming Park on behalf of Mayor Giuliani. Nick displays the models to the press and thanks the driver for the return of his "babies." This photo op concluded, the CBS Fox Video publicity team swings into action, announcing the US home video release of all three half-hour Wallace and Gromit adventures, along with innumerable tie-ins. Storybooks, calendars, postcards, tee-shirts, balloons, jewelry, mugs, figurines, and refrigerator magnets are all mentioned. "Eventually there will be a Wallace and Gromit item in every American home," says CBS Fox President/CEO Sara Frayne. "You chuckle, but that's my dream."

The press is given a short history of Aardman Animations studio, where Nick started straight out of art school and where he has produced all his work. "Wallace & Gromit are akin to the crown jewels in Great Britain," says VP for Childrens Marketing, Andre Backer. "They've been visited by Queen Elizabeth. We're looking for the same popularity in the US." CBS/Fox's battle plan for conquering America: "We'll be going into over 100 markets, airing promos for the videos and the books on kids shows like Fox Kids Network. There'll be extensive advertising in Totally Kids, the Fox Kids Club magazine. There will be joint displays of the books and videos."

As cameras snap away, Nick Park squats down in a makeshift pen lined with pristine bales of hay to pet the heads of four or five spotless sheep. He's presented with a green sign that declares this to be "Nick Park." Park bears these photo

Nick Park in his recent visit to New York promoting the CBS Fox video release of his Academy Award winning film *A Close Shave*.

ops with good grace but balks at being escorted to his next appearance in a motorcycle sidecar. He grabs a cab instead. The bike enthusiast who rounded up the vintage Harley (a close match to Gromit's cycle in A Close Shave) grumbles, "he chickened out on me!," then drives down Broadway to Times Square's Virgin Superstore alone.

The Virgin SuperStore burrows down under Times Square in a series of basements and sub-basements. Virgin sets Park up at a table two levels down, next to the video section and just in front of the in-store cafe. So many fans line up (over 200, by my count) that halfway through a guard announces there will be no more personal dedications—just straight signatures. Nick's arm is getting tired, but he keeps smiling.

Wallace and Gromit's chances of becoming household names in America? With CBS Fox behind them, pretty good. I'm already showing everybody my calendar and refrigerator magnet.

Eighth Annual Medicine Wheel Animation Festival Issues Call For Films *This touring festival is open to US and Canadian independent filmmakers (born or residing). Films must be 16mm, under 25 minutes and may be from any year. There is no entry fee. Medicine Wheel is a non-profit organization promoting animation as an art form. The Festival plays at colleges, museums, galleries, and art theaters such as George Eastman House, Rochester, NY and the Rhode Island School of Design. Beauty, innovation, content and experimentation are the qualities wanted in submissions. All proceeds go to the filmmakers or the Medicine Wheel Artists' Retreat. Entry forms are available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Medicine Wheel Animation Festival, PO Box 1088, Groton, MA 01450-3088. Phone/fax (508)-448-3717. Email: Medwheel@tiac.net. Deadline for entries is February 1, 1997.*

The Sixth Annual Environmental Media Awards Announced. *Among this year's winners are: Rocko's Modern Life (Children's TV Program, Animated), The Simpsons: Lisa the Vegetarian (TV Episodic Comedy) and Ann Telnaes, North American Syndicate (Editorial Cartoonist). Major contributors for the event are DreamWorks, as well as other entertainment related companies, including Variety.*

***Spy Dogs* To Infiltrate USA Networks.** *InVision Entertainment, the Sherman Oaks, California-based animation studio owned by Daniel S. Kletzky and Michael Hack, has announced that it has entered into a development deal with USA Networks based on a concept by cartoonist Jim Benton, The Secret Files of the Spy Dogs. The cable network is contemplating the animated series for fall 1997 on its USA Network. In a separate deal, Kletzky's Entertainment Licensing Associates, in Santa Monica, has been appointed the worldwide licensing agency for the series.*

Will Vinton & TBWA Chait/Day *Enjoy The Ride* In New *Toys* Spot For Nissan. *Will Vinton Studios has just completed Toys, a new 60-second commercial for TBWA Chait/Day and Nissan. The spot which combines stop-motion animation with live-action to punctuate Nissan's new tagline "Enjoy the ride." Directed by Mark Gustafson, the commercial uses specially created plastic dolls with clay facial parts that were hand-sculpted to produce subtle facial expressions. According to Gustafson, "The animation was stylized because we wanted the dolls' movement to be as doll-like as possible. We were able to get maximum performance out of the characters with limited motion."*

Allen Digs *Ants* At DreamWorks. *Woody Allen will take a voice-over part in DreamWorks' animated feature Ants. Allen will play "a character who becomes disenchanted with the day-to-day drudgery of the totalitarian ant world," according to the news release. The film is a collaboration between DreamWorks SKG Feature Animation and computer animation studio Pacific Data Images, which is 40% owned by DreamWorks.*

Early Kid Gets WB's *Earthworm*. *In a move aimed at reducing the drain of kids viewing levels on Saturday morning, the WB Network is taking a tactical gamble by flip-flopping its schedule. The change, which was initiated on October 19, is dubbed "Big Kids Go First..." and puts "older-skewing superhero" programs Freakazoid and Earthworm Jim in the starting positions in the morning schedule, followed by Superman and Road Rovers . The plan reverses the usual practice of beginning Saturday morning scheduleds with "younger-skewing shows." This sort of change is likely being done in response to the widespread decline among US terrestrial broadcasters in their audience for children's programming, while the Nickelodeon cable network has dramatically increased its ratings in the same marketplace.*

John Canemaker's *Tex Avery, The Great Animation Director Form The Golden Age Of The Hollywood*

***Cartoon* Now Available.** *This illustrated coffee table book by animation historian and filmmaker John Canemaker, contains an assemblage of Tex Avery-related art work, including original storyboards, animation cels and character sketches. It covers Avery's period at MGM from 1942-55, which included some of the director's most famous films. The book is available from Turner Publishing at $34.95.*

The following items are from AWM's October 7, 1996 Email News Flash:

Fox Kids Network To Go Independent With Saban: *Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. is cutting its Fox Children's Network (FCN) loose as part of an agreement to place the operation into a jointly-held company with Saban Entertainment. FCN will continue to be under the direction of Margaret Loesch, who now have an equity position in the company; Loesch leadership has been thought responsible for the network's dominance in children's TV in the US, a position which has lately been whittled away by Nickelodeon, the Cartoon Network and the new WB Network. The move is essentially an expansion of last year's alliance between Fox and Saban to start a new series of children's networks around the world. The alliance gives FCN access to Saban's large library of animated and other TV shows (including Mighty Morphin Power Rangers and X-Men), including numerous titles made for the overseas market, which it is said to need in order to more effectively compete with the likes of Disney and Warner Bros. The move is also aimed at raising money for further expansion, possibly through a public stock offering. There was also speculation that the move may also be a sign that Murdoch is backing away from children's markets in the US in favor of news and talk shows.*

***Quest* Wins Cartoon d'Or At Connemara Cartoon Forum.** *The 1996 Cartoon d'Or Award presented at the 7th CARTOON Forum, held in Galway, Ireland, September 19-21, was given to the young German director Tyron Montgomery for his first film, Quest, a 11-1/2 minute short featuring a puppet made out of sand in pursuit of water ... The trophy was accompanied by a 35,000 ECU (US$43,750) prize that will allow Montgomery to start a more ambitious project, such as a feature film or a TV special.*

Supported by the MEDIA Programme of the European Union, the Cartoon Forum gathered together some 500 participants, including 250 producers, 129 broadcasters and other investors to discuss 67 animation projects designed for television or theaters. (CARTOON's members include 304 companies from 18 countries.)

After 3 days of negotiation, 19 projects (87 hours of animation, with budgets totaling over 53.6 million ECU [$67 million]) received the necessary guarantees to secure short term financing and some of which will go into production in the next 6 months: La Vache (UK, 13 x l0'), Hospital (UK, 13 x 26'), The First Snow of Winter (UK, 1 x 26'), Steam Rail(Italy, 26 x 26'), Max & Moritz (Germany, 39 x 7'), Séléna et Coeurdor (Germany, 26 x 5'), Bemmi Bommerland (Germany, 13 x 5'), Eugenio (France, l x 26'), Tim Techno (UK, 13 x 22'), A la Recherche du Père Noël (Belgium, l x 52'), Pense Bêtes (France, 52 x 6'30"), Patrouille 03 (France, 26 x 24'), Perry and Nick, the Alien Dogs (Germany, 26 x 26'), The Rabbit Rovers (Germany, 26 x l2') Varnii Roop (UK, 13 x 11'), L'Enfant au Grelot (France, 1 x 26'), Tom & Sheenah (France, 26 x 26'), Henrietta, Hippo Tales (UK, 24 x 5'), and Les Mémoires extraordinaires de la Sorcière Camomille (France, 52 x 6').

Twenty-one projects received sufficient interest to indicate that they will "secure the financing in the average term." These projects represent 117 hours of animation and budgets totaling over 71.1 million ECU [about $88.9 million].

The Forum also saw the premiere of La Freccia Azzurra, a new animated feature from Italy's La Lanterna Magica and directed by Enzo D'Alo. (The film, it was noted, received aid for development 1992-93 Cartoon Forums.)

The 8th Cartoon Forum is scheduled to be held in Arles, France, from September 17-21, 1997. For further information please contact CARTOON, Boulevard Lambermont, 418 - 1030 Brussels, Belgium. Telephone: (32) (2) 245 12 00. Fax: (32) (2) 245 46 89.

Kurosawa & Pioneer Join Perfect World To Do Animation. *Pioneer, the giant Japanese electronics firm,*

and Kurosawa Enterprises USA, a Los Angeles-based production company associated with ace Japanese director Akira Kurosawa, have launched a new animation venture with Perfect World Entertainment, a newly formed corporation. It plans to produce animated feature films using Japanese animation and direction, combined with North American and European artists, writers and properties. The new company's vice president of development, Randy Lofficier, noted that, "Pioneer will be a controlling partner in Perfect World, as well as being artistically involved with every phase of production, from development to distribution."

Perfect World has already developing several projects, with each partner contributing from one-third to one-half of the $10 to $15 million budgets. Overseeing the venture's operations are Taro Maki (producer of the popular direct-to-video anime feature, *Tenchi Muyo*), executive producer of Pioneer's Film Business Division, who will be in charge of production, Tak W. Abe, president of Kurosawa Enterprises USA, who will coordinate activities between Los Angeles and Tokyo, and Ms. Lofficier (formerly vice president of Starwatcher, a comic book and animation talent agency).

The most unusual aspect of the deal is the involvement of Akira Kurosawa, whose live-action films such as *Rashomon* and *Seven Samurai,* are often included on lists of the greatest films of all times. Tak W. Abe, who has been with Kurosawa for 16 years, has previously worked extensively on Japanese animated features and television productions.

HBO Creates New Animation Division. Home Box Office (HBO), the US cable network, has announced the formation of HBO Animation, which will be a division of HBO Original Programming, which will create animated programming for HBO and other broadcast and cable networks. The division's first two projects, both slated to debut with six episodes on HBO in 1997, are *Spawn,* an adaptation of Todd McFarlane's comic book originally created in 1992, and *Spicy City,* a "contemporary" adaptation of pulp magazine fare from the 1930s and 1940s, is being created by veteran animator Ralph Bakshi (*Fritz the Cat*). *Spawn* will closely follow the story lines and use the same characters as the original comic book, which involves a hired killer who dies in a fire, then makes a deal with the devil to return to his mortal state. *Spicy City*, which will be an anthology series, will cover such genres as science fiction, horror and film noir, and is said to explore such themes as cyberspace, DNA cloning and virtual sex machines.

Despite its penchant for adult programming like its *Real Sex* documentary series, original animation on HBO has usually been family fare. Chris Albrecht, president, HBO Original Programming, stated that, "HBO Animation will explore the largely untapped field of adult-oriented animation, allowing offbeat creative talents the kind of unrestrictive freedom that's rare on television." The new division was founded by Carmi Zlotnik, vice president of Original Programming, Production and Creative Affairs, and will be based at HBO's Los Angeles offices.

(In this regard, it should be noted that Ralph Bakshi, who animation has not been evident since the failure of his last feature, *Coo/ World*, recently made several short films for the Cartoon Network's World Premiere Toon series. However, the films apparently proved to be unsuitable for the family-oriented network. It is unlikely that Bakshi will have the same problem with HBO.)

The new operation will be supervised by Catherine Winder (former producer of *Aeon Flux*), vice president, HBO Animation, who will oversee all the day-to-day creative and operational facets of the division. "We are taking a theatrical approach to television production," Winder says, with an emphasis on originality, quality and detail."

The division will also be available on a service basis for third-party projects. As with its in-house projects, outside productions to be produced by HBO Animation will include both family and prime time programming. In addition, Eric Radomski (producer-director on *Batman: The Animated Series*), the division's supervising director, has been given a development deal enabling him to create and work on original properties, including an anthology series dealing with dysfunctional relationships. HBO Animation is also working on two other possible series, including a comedy and a political satire. Budgets for these projects seem to be on the high end, in the $600,000-$700,000 per episode range, which is considerably higher than most Saturday morning series.

***Cats* Feature Project Gets New Life.** The Andrew Lloyd Webber musical play, for which Universal Pictures bought the screen rights a number of years ago for Steven Spielberg's London-based Amblimation unit, is now scheduled to be done by Universal itself. The studio has commissioned Joel Cohen and Alec Sokolow to redo the script that playwright Tom

Stoppard wrote in 1994. Cohen and Sokolow are best known for their Oscar-nominated screenplay for Toy Story. The film will be produced by Webber's Really Useful Film Co. with Universal, with ex-Amblimation directors Phil Nibbelink (American Tail: Fievel Goes West) and Dick Zondag (Balto) set to direct.

Amblimation had set up a separate company, City Feature Animation, to handle the production on Cats, and it was even rumored that Spielberg was thinking of using it to make his animation directing debut. The project was nominally kept alive when Amblimation moved from London to the Los Angeles area, before Spielberg's operations were merged into DreamWorks SKG.

3DO Switches Drops Hardware To Focus On Software. *The Redwood City, California-based video game company says it intends to sell part or all of its hardware business by year's end and eliminate 150 jobs from its 450 person staff. Chairman and chief executive officer Trip Hawkins will also hand over operating control to 3DO president Hugh Martin. The company's focus will now shift to Internet and computer games. Its first Internet game, Meridian 59, will be launched this month.*

Alliance Communications Reduces Stake In *Reboot* Producer: *Toronto-based Alliance, at its annual meeting last month that Vancouver-based Mainframe Entertainment paid it C$8.6 million (US$6.3 million) to buy back some of its shares. This reduces Alliance's stake in the computer animation house to 15% from the 33% stake it acquired 2 years ago. This is on top of a US$5.5 million buyout in July, which means Alliance has not only recouped its investment in Mainframe, but has turned a handsome profit as well.*

Semi-Original Version Of Disney's *Three Little Pigs* Now On Video *Walt Disney Home Video last month released Three Little Pigs, featuring three Academy Award winning cartoons in its "Favorite Stories" series. The cassette features pristine copies of Three Little Pigs (Bert Gillett, 1933) and its two sequels, The Big Bad Wolf (1934) and Three Little Wolves (1936), all with their original titles, though (as noted below) not always with the original soundtracks.*

Bert Gillett's *Three Little Pigs* (Disney, 1933) in which the Big Bad Wolf disguises himself as a Jewish Fuller Brushman, a scene later reanimated for the film's 1948 reissue.

The huge success of Three Little Pigs, with its enormously popular theme song, "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?," was such that it said to have led Disney to go ahead with plans to make animated features. (The film made more money than many live-action features.) It also spawned some controversy for the scene when the Big Bad Wolf disguises himself as a Jewish Fuller Brush Man when he comes knocking on the house of the third little pig, complete with stereotypical clothes and a heavy accent. Disney later reanimated the peddler section for the 1948 reissue and it was the version that has been in circulation ever since. However, for the current release, Disney has gone back and used the original picture material for this sequence, though the soundtrack seems to be from the reissue (and is thus a bit out of synch). It is not clear why this version was released, and one wonders if there will be any sort of reaction from Jewish groups this time around. However, most viewers, ignorant of stereotypes gone by, may not realize what they are seeing. In any case, for film historians at least, it is an unexpected surprise. The tape is available in the US for $12.99.

***Armored Trooper Votoms Stage 2: Kummen Jungle Wars* On Video.** *Volumes 1-5 of the science-fiction adventure will be released to the American home video market by Central Park Media on December 3. The series is centered on Armored Trooper pilot Chirico Cuvie, who is on the run from a conspiracy and his own army. Each tape, which is subtitled in English is available at $24.95 each, or $99.95 for the "Collector's Set."*

Electronic Arts Signs Agreement With Blizzard. *San Mateo, California-based Electronic Arts, a leading interactive software company, announced it has entered into an exclusive worldwide agreement with Blizzard Entertainment of Irvine, California, to develop, publish and distribute their best-selling Warcraft II and upcoming Diablo titles for "next generation videogame systems." Under the agreement, Electronic Arts gains exclusive development and publishing rights to the console versions of these popular strategy and role-playing games, as well as gaining exclusive distribution rights.*

In related news, Electronic Arts has released Andretti Racing 97 for

the Sony Playstation platform. The game features interviews with racing legend Mario Andretti and his sons Michael and Jeff, along with a "head-to-head" racing in both Indy and Stock car competitions on 16 different courses. It carries a suggested retail price of $59.95.

Midland Opens New Offices In Berkeley. *Midland Productions, makers of the Imax ridefilm, Fun House Express (which featured stop-motion animation), has moved from Richmond, California, to new quarters in nearby Berkeley. The new facility boasts new digital capabilities, which Midland vice president Yas Takata says will "greatly expands our storytelling capabilities and what we can offer our clients. We're pleased that the Midland toolbox now includes live action, miniatures and computer-generated images (CGI) for all film and video formats." The company's digital-animation team is presently at work on an independent production slated for release in mid-1997. The company was founded in 1986 and entered the simulation and special-venue fields in 1988. It also creates special effects for commercials and feature films.*

MCA Gets International Rights To *Rocky & His Friends*: *MCA TV International acquired 10-year foreign TV distribution rights to the classic TV show. The estate of Jay Ward, the Rocky producer who died in 1989, signed with MCA when its agreement with Disney for similar rights expired. For MCA, the 1960s-vintage show provides library animation, which is in short supply. Jim McNamara, president of MCA Worldwide Television Distribution, said the property will be a priority at the MIPCOM TV program market that starts October 7 in Cannes.*

Canemaker's Felix In Paperback. *John Canemaker's Felix: The Twisted Tale of the World's Most Famous Cat has just been issued in paperback. The book tells the story of Otto Messmer, the man behind the creation of Felix back in 1919 and who drew him for over three decades, and of his boss, Pat Sullivan, who took credit for the character who became the first animated cartoon superstar. Canemaker, an animator and animation historian, heads New York University's animation program and is the author of Winsor McCay: His Art and Life and Before Animation Begins.*

Whole Toon Catalog Returns. *The 12th edition of the catalog of "over 27,000 foreign, classic American, silent, documentary, fine arts and animation videos" has just been issued by Chicago-based Facets Video. The direct mail retailer of videos, laserdiscs and books, founded eight years ago by Seattle's Doug Ranney, closed down last year and its status was unclear until Facets stepped in. Copies of Whole Toon Catalog #12 are available free by calling Facets at 1-800-331-6197, writing Facets Video at 1517 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago, IL 60614, by fax at 1-312-929-5437, email at sales@facets.org. You can also check their Web page on AWN at http://www.awn.com.*

Wendy's Fast Food Quest. *The new Warner Bros. animated feature, The Quest for Camelot, due for release in fall 1997, is apparently scheduled to sign on Wendy's as its fast food partner for North America. Warners started negotiating with the fast food chain when talks with Burger King (considered a more desirable partner) broke down. (Burger King eventually signed on with 20th Century-Fox's Anastasia, which is due to be released at the same time.) Such deals, which provide considerable promotion and up front money, are considered essential these days for big budget animated films.*

The following items are from AWM's October 21, 1996 Email News Flash:

Ottawa 96 Award Winners:

- *Grand Prize for Best Film: Bird In The Window by Igor Kovalyov (Klasky-Csupo), USA.*
- *Grand Prize for Best Television Production: Treehouse Of Horror VI: Homer 3D by Tim Johnson, USA.*
- *Category A: Best production under 10 minutes in length that is not classified in categories C to H: Joe's Apartment: Funky Towel by Chris Wedge, USA. Special Mention went to: Da Da by Piet Kroon, The Netherlands and Combination Skin by Anthony Hodgeson, UK.*
- *Category B: Best production between 10 and 30 minutes in length that is not classified in categories C to H: The End Of The World In Four Seasons by Paul Driessen, Canada.*
- *Category C: The National Film Board Prize for best first film: The Saint Inspector by Mike Booth, UK. Special Mention went to Estorio Do Gato E Da Luna (Tale About The Cat And The Moon) by Pedro Serrazina, Portugal and Lazarus by Vanessa B. Cruz, USA.*
- *Category D: Children's animated productions that are not part of a made-for-television: Katten Mons (Mons The Cat) by Pjotr Sapegin, Norway.*
- *Category E: Educational productions: No prize awarded*

- *Category F: Promotional works such as commercials, public service announcements, opening titles, etc. produced for film or television: Intermax by Cordell Barker, Canada. Special Mention went to Bell Atlantic: Big Deal by Carlos Saldanha, USA and M-ID: Taku-Overdrive (Karate Boy) by Isao Nishigouri, Japan.*
- *Category G: Animated productions especially produced for television, and which are not part of a series: A Close Shave by Nick Park, UK.*
- *Category H: Animated productions especially produced for television, and which are part of a series: No prize awarded*

Craft Prizes:

- *Special Prize for Animation: Gagarin by Alexij Kharitidi, Russia.*
- *Special Prize for Design: 1895 by Priit Parn & Janno Poldma, Estonia and Yellow Shoes by Alice Stevens, UK.*
- *Music/Sound Award: Normand Roger for the The End Of The World In Four Seasons, Canada.*
- *Best Computer Animation: Bell Atlantic Big Deal by Carlos Saldanha, USA.*

Media Prizes:

- *Special Prize for Drawn Animation: The Wind Subsides by Vuk Jevremovic, Germany.*
- *Special Prize for Unusual Technique: Jumping Joan by Petra Freeman, UK.*
- *The Public Prize: Hilary by Anthony Hodgeson, UK.*
- *The Norman McLaren Heritage Award: Louise Beaudet.*
- *The Gordon Bruce Award for Humor: Gagarin by Alexij Kharitidi, Russia.*
- *UNICEF Prize for best representation of a vision of children in a healthy and environmentally safe world: Goldtooth by Derek Lamb & Kaj Pindal, Canada.*
- *Viacom Canada Prize for best Canadian production: La Chasse Galerie (Flying Canoe) by Robert Doucet, Canada.*
- *Zack Schwartz Award for Best Story: Hilary by Anthony Hodgeson, UK.*
- *Chromocolour Prize for Best Student Film: Hilary by Anthony Hodgeson, UK.*
- *Special Jury Prize: Aardman Animations.*

Writers Form Wolfmill Entertain-ment. *Craig Miller and Marv Wolf-man have joined together to develop and produce live-action and animated television programming aimed at the children's and young adult market. Wolfmill already has deals in place for three series: Pocket Dragon Adventures debuting internationally fall of 1997, T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents, based on the 60s comic book by Wally Wood, and "A Man Called Ax", also based on a comic book by Wolfman and artist Shawn McManus.*

Toronto's Catapult Productions *Monster By Mistake* To Air On Canada's YTV. *The Halloween TV special will air on Canada's YTV on Saturday, October 26, at 5:30 PM. The story concerns an 8 year old boy who gets mixed up in a magic spell and becomes a monster at inopportune times. His big sister and the ghost of a jazz musician try to help him out of his predicament. The show is the first effort of Toronto's Catapult Productions. Partnered with Cambium Film and Video for the project, the two companies hope to sell a series based on the special. The entire show was done using Prisms software and Silicon Graphics hardware.*

Nickelodeon Clicks With Kids. *Nickelodeon continued its yearlong gains in viewership among kids ages 2-11 in the opening round of the new season last month with another 12% increase in viewership, giving Nickelodeon control of 56% of that audience, while the networks and syndicators lost 23% of their market share, according to Neilson Media Research figures provided by Nickelodeon.*

***Casper* Special Halloween Episode To Air On Fox Kids Network.** *Now in its second season on Fox Kids Network, Casper haunts the airwaves with a special Halloween episode to air Saturday, October 26, 1996 at 8 a.m. PT/9 a.m. ET. The half-hour special will follow the adventures of Casper, Kat, Stretch, Stinkie, Spooky, and Poil in three stories, The Tricks A Treat, Spooky & Poil Meet the Monsters and Thirteen Ways To Scare a Fleshie. The Universal Studios Monsters, including Dracula, Frankenstein, The Creature from the Black Lagoon and the Mummy join in the ghostly exploits with the gang at Whipstaff Manor.*

Activision Enters Distribution Deal With Parsoft Interactive. *Activision has aquired worldwide Windows 95 rights to three of Parsoft's flight combat simulation games. The company expects to ship the first title, A-10 Cuba!, (sequel to A-10 Attack!) by the Christmas holiday season. The other two games, tentatively titled A-10 Gulf! and Dogfight, are slated for release in 1997. All three games will ofer single and multi-player modes and will allow gamers head-to-head via modem or against their friends over local area networks.*

Animation World Magazine 1996–97 Calendar

December Issue Highlights

Welcome to the ever expanding world of Interactive Animation. We'll have an overview of the latest trends in CD-ROM interactive games, as well as a roundup of quotes from industry leaders. We'll step into the offices of Sierra On Line, Creative Capers and take a close up look at the various animations based on the Street Fighter video games.

Other feature stories include Linda Jones' personal look at the history of Animation Art, complemented by a look back at How the Grinch Stole Christmas on its 30th Anniversary of Chuck Jones. There is also a review of Space Jam, as well as much, much more.

Animation Festivals *(January '97)*

A study of the world of international animation festivals, how they have changed over the years and how they have affected the animation industry.

International Animation Industry *(February '97)*

Spotlighting key animation around the world, focusing on aspects of the business of animation, including the state of the industry, labor relations and production.

Children & Animation *(March '97)*

This issue deals with several facets of the relationship of children and animation; animation for children, animation made by children, and the use of animation to reach the children's market.